Changeling
STORYTELLERS GUIDE

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The Teller's Tale

by Nicky Rea

Dark is yonder town,
Dark are those within,
You are the brown swan,
Going within fearlessly
Their hearts beneath your hand,
Their tongues beneath your foot,
No word will they utter
To do you ill.
— Caitlin Matthews, compiler,
"Blessing on a Young Person's Leaving Home"

"Hey, what you got in the sack?" The high-pitched voice pierced the sound of traffic, startling the slender young man who clutched the "sack" — actually a long, thin parcel wrapped to protect it from the rain.

Seif momentarily glanced across the street at a thin woman acting as lookout for the crack dealers who frequented the fire-gutted structure. She scattered ashes from her cigarette and paced up and down, keeping vigil under an old, torn awning that deflected the worst of the downpour. Faded letters spelling out "Empori" could just be discerned on the part of the awning still remaining. *Johnson's Emporium. I remember when I stole a candy bar from the store once and ate it on the way home. Dad was so mad when he found out. I must have polished cars and scrubbed sidewalks for two weeks to pay old man Johnson back for that. Now it's just another crack house. Somehow, I've got to convince Dad to take Mom out of this neighborhood before it's too late.*

Seif felt a twinge somewhere inside his head and glanced down at the bundle that was covered with a garbage can liner — cradled in his arms like a baby. *I hear your call. Because of you, I have left my job and friends. Now I must leave my home and parents, too. Don't worry, I won't fail you, no matter what the cost.*

Seif drew himself away from the thoughts that threatened to overwhelm him. Finally, he noticed the gaggle of neighborhood kids huddled in the doorway of one of the abandoned buildings on the street. He counted six of them, not one over 12, most of them in pseudo-gang attire: baggy pants, T-shirts, cheap imitations of the latest footgear and a smattering of hats, bandannas and tattoos. Seif frowned at the children gathered belligerently around him as if they awaited a toll for his passage.

The largest boy, obviously the leader from the respect given to him by the others, stepped forward. "Hey, man. You deaf? I'm talking to you." Seif looked over the leader's head and saw a face he recognized from his apartment building.

"Tom? Thomas Lincoln, I know you. Your parents live downstairs from us," Seif said, "Why aren't you in school?"

The boy flinched, black face almost glowing with embarrassment at being recognized. Tom's clothes, loose like those of the others in the group, hung on his thin frame as though on a coat hanger. Tight, dark curls, half-hidden beneath the bandanna he wore, jutted out over his prominent ears. His brown eyes begged Seif not to make any more of it than he already had.

"We don't go to school anymore. We're a gang," the leader informed Seif. He was the oldest, Seif decided, and took pains to make himself appear older — and tougher — than his years. "That looks like a gun you're carrying in that sack," the leader stated, flicking an unlit cigarette from one side of his mouth to the other. "We could use a gun."

"Well, my young friends, sirs and madams, I'll tell you what I have in the sack, but we must find somewhere out of the rain," Seif said and smiled as the children turned to enter what was undoubtedly their gang "headquarters" — once a store specializing in rental furniture. Seif's parents had once patronized the store, as had most of the neighborhood, because the weekly payments were affordable.

Tom Lincoln led the way back into the dusky interior of the building. *At least they're not right in front of the crack house anymore*, Seif thought.

When they were settled on a mishmash of old crates and pieces of carpet and ready to see what the man had to show, Seif placed the parcel on a three-legged table behind him and turned to face them. *I wonder…do I tell them this story in hopes of changing their lives or to justify to myself what I must do? Allah will show me the way.*

"The sky weeps today for the loss of a king," he began. "It is his story I must tell. Many of the best stories — the ones few people believe are true — begin with the words 'Once upon a time,' so I shall do that to begin this tale.

"Once upon a time, in a great land known as America, there lived a king. He was not the king of America. He wasn't even an advisor to the President, but he ruled over some very special people who lived in that land — let's call them "the Dreamkin." Some of the Dreamkin were poor, like a lot of our neighbors here. Others were rich, but most were just getting by. Still, they all had one thing in common: Each one of these special people was really a story that someone had once told or that someone dreamed. Perhaps one of them was even a dream *you* dreamed.

"Now, the Dreamkin didn't always get along together very well. They had differences of opinion; some of them didn't like others because of the color of their skin or maybe because the other always got the better house or job. The richer ones lorded it over the poorer ones, too. The underdogs just wanted equality, but the ones on top thought they had the right to rule. The two sides went to war.

"The war raged on for years. Dreamkin on both sides died terribly. Their stories died with them.

"But then hope came. A king arose who was very different, even though he was one of the wealthier Dreamkin. While still just a young boy, he put a stop to the fighting between the different sides and ruled as a king for all the people, not just the rich ones. To help him in ruling, he had a magical sword — a blade of light that was both a symbol and a guarantee of freedom and peace.

"Now, some of the Dreamkin came from a faraway land called Ireland, and they had once had a High King there, too. They called him Ard Ri. Here the king was called by his first name, David. I'm sure you've heard the story of David and Goliath. David became king when he was just a young boy, too — probably not much older than any of you. Eleven? Twelve? He accepted his responsibilities to the people and ruled as best he could."

The boy leader shifted around uncomfortably, as he was annoyed that the storyteller had so aptly pegged his age. He had hoped to be thought slightly older. The others sat in various stages of attention, wondering when the drugs, guns and fast cars that marked most of the stories they heard would show up in the narrative. The youngest, a girl of perhaps 10 years, had almost fallen asleep, lulled by the soft sounds of the rain and Seif's velvety tones. Tom, however, sat with his elbows on his knees, lost in the tale.

"So, David became ruler at a time when Dreamkin fought Dreamkin. He stopped the war and built a grand castle, where all Dreamkin could come to tell him their troubles or petition him for favors. He was happy in his castle, but lonely. What he needed was—"

"I know," one of the smaller kids jumped up, "he needed a bitch." The other children laughed as Seif shook his head. Tom, disturbed by the interruption, frowned at the boy who had spoken.

Seif continued as though there had been no break in his narrative. "I was going to say 'a queen.' He needed a wife to help him rule and keep him company. And he found one, a beautiful young woman with long black hair and sky-blue eyes. They fell in love and got married.

"And because David wanted everyone in his kingdom to meet his beautiful wife, they decided to travel all over and see how the other Dreamkin were getting on. They started that journey here in Atlanta. Last night, the local ruler of the Dreamkin hosted a grand masquerade ball, kind of like a costume party, and the Dreamkin came to dance and enjoy the company of the king and his new queen.

"But something terrible happened during the ball. David disappeared. His new wife was frantic, his knights rushed around searching for him, but no one could find the king. He had vanished without a trace. Only one thing was left behind: his wondrous blade, the king's sword. Rather than disappear with David, it appeared in the hands of a local storyteller.

"You may not know it, but many magical swords can speak when they choose to do so. This one let the storyteller know that David had not only disappeared, but that he was in terrible danger. The sword wanted the teller of tales to take part in a tale himself and go in search of the missing king.

"Even though the storyteller didn't believe he was worthy to undertake such an important quest, he could not refuse. The king of the Dreamkin is bonded with the land and the people of his kingdom. Without the king, the land and the people will suffer. Who knows what might happen if the king is not found? Already the land is responding to the loss of him. The skies send down torrents of rain when it should be clear and sunny. The king must be found!"

The leader was clearly impatient. A few of the others looked out through the broken windowpanes at the gray sky and drizzling rain, suddenly uneasy.

"For this reason," Seif resumed his narrative, "and because the storyteller admires both the king and queen, he accepted the quest. The adventure promises to be a wonderful, shining story, just waiting to unfold — I'm sure you've all read adventure stories in school...oh, that's right, you don't *go* to school. I guess you'll miss out on the adventures then."

Seif smiled to himself as each child looked at the others, unsure whether or not this was a taunt. The leader squinted his eyes, daring Seif to begin the expected lecture all the children had heard so many times before. He brazenly flicked his lighter and lit the cigarette he'd been playing with, waiting for Seif to say anything. The storyteller ignored the gesture, though he waved the smoke away lazily. *Bad for the voice.*

"As you may have guessed by now," Seif continued, "the storyteller has started his search. He has already quit his job and said good-bye to old friends. Now he's on his way home to tell his parents he has to leave. He can't even tell them where he's going because he doesn't know and they wouldn't understand even if he did. It may take many months — or even years — for the teller of tales and the abandoned sword to find the missing king and return him to the kingdom. Meanwhile, the storyteller must be away from all he knows and loves."

No matter how gently I try to tell them, my parents will never understand why I'm leaving. I cannot spin them a tale of heroes and quests, even if the tale is a true one. For them, I will have to cushion my story in lies and evasions — knowing that they will take more comfort in believing that their son goes away in search of opportunities and wealth than that he travels on a journey of honor and sacrifice.

A restless stirring in his audience brought Seif back to his story. He looked at the expectant faces and saw the promise of beauty in the younger girl as she listened, her mouth half-open, to his tale of kings and swords. He noted the near-belief in the eyes of the smaller boy and the edgy disdain of the leader. *Some will remember the story at least. They may even pass it on to their friends, if they ever go back to school.*

"Though he did not know it until just a few moments ago," Seif said as he realized why he had felt compelled to

tell the children his story, "the storyteller now thinks he knows why he was chosen for this search. He will travel throughout the kingdom and tell this tale to any who will listen. He will ask them to tell their friends the story so that it can be passed on to as many people as possible. And when the story is on everyone's lips, someone who hears it may know where the king can be found, or the king may hear of it and find his way home."

Seif stood, stretched his muscles and tried to judge the effect his tale had on the "gang." He glanced at his watch and saw that he had only an hour or so before his parents left for the day. He'd have to hurry. Luckily, they lived just two blocks away.

"I see the rain is letting up a little. Now is the time to run between the raindrops if any of you want to go to school and learn of the adventures waiting for you there. I must be on my way. There is much for me to do and I must see my parents before they leave for work."

"You still didn't tell us what's in the sack!" The leader stood and looked at Seif threateningly.

"Didn't I? Then I must beg your pardon for not being the storyteller I thought myself to be. What is in the sack? Just a sword, my young friends, only a blade in search of a lost companion."

Some of the kids laughed. A few muttered "Wacko" or "Loon" under their breaths. The leader looked for support but found most of the others drifting away. "Still looks like a gun to me," he finally stated and swaggered from the room.

Seif looked after him and said sadly, "And so it shall probably always be a gun to you. I am sorry I could not change that for you."

"*I* believe you." The voice that said that was so quiet that Seif wasn't certain he had heard it at first. Turning, he saw Thomas Lincoln huddled on the crate he'd occupied throughout the story. "Could I see it?" Tom smiled.

Seif walked to the table and unwrapped the blade. Lifting it from the concealing folds of the garbage bag, he held it out for Tom's inspection. The boy extended a hand toward the sword and saw a rusty, pitted thing hardly worth keeping. "I believe," Tom mumbled to himself and closed his eyes, letting his hand feel the silky metal of the blade. Startled by its smoothness, he opened his eyes —

— and fell into a dream. Clashing images crawled across his vision; shouts and screams echoed together with poetry and the sounds of birdsong and harps. He saw himself clothed in silks and velvets, standing tall and handsome amid a roomful of beautiful men and women. Bowing to him, they called him "chronicler" and "noble one." Other images raged through his mind, too — things he would work out later. For now, he knew his true name was Ogomotana, which means Truth. He was one of the Dreamkin known as eshu, just as the storyteller. The young boy opened his eyes and stared up at his kithmate.

"It's all true," he laughed.

"Yes, even the unhappy parts," Seif extended a hand to the newborn childling. *He won't be a childling long, though, from the look of him.* "You've just gone through your Chrysalis, courtesy of Caliburn. I would normally be glad to be your mentor in your new life, but I must leave before the day is out. I would be glad to introduce you to Myrtle, who helped me when I first became aware of my true self." *How did he have such an easy Chrysalis? Was it because of the sword?*

Inside his head, Seif felt Caliburn respond. *He is the one who will take your place as a teller of tales for the dreamers here. Ogomotana will remember the story you've told him and he'll tell it to whomever will listen.*

"Will she teach me what I need to know?" Ogomotana seemed very small to the older eshu as the boy shifted from one foot to the other.

"Of course she will, and you will become the greatest storyteller of us all." Seif clapped a hand on the boy's shoulder. "Just don't forget. Remember I won't be here after today. I wish I could stay and guide you, but my quest comes first. I always thought I'd be a teller of tales, I never thought I'd *be* the story." *But I am the story now, and it's time to pass on the mantle of tale-teller to someone else. My job is to find David, and who better to locate the king than an eshu? Whatever road the quest takes me on, if I follow my heart, I'll find him.*

The childling's eyes gleamed with sudden self-knowledge. Dignity surrounded him like a cloak as he gazed at Seif and drew himself up to his full height. Seif admired the dark raiment of the childling's *voile*, his chimerical clothing, with its intricate folds and sparkling decorations looking like the night sky. The elder eshu accorded the childling a bow, as between equals.

"I won't forget, Seif," Ogomotana assured him. "You can go on your quest without worries. I heard every word of your story and I'll remember it all." Though his words were serious, the childling's eyes hinted at mischief, "In fact, I may even make it better!"

INTRODUCTION
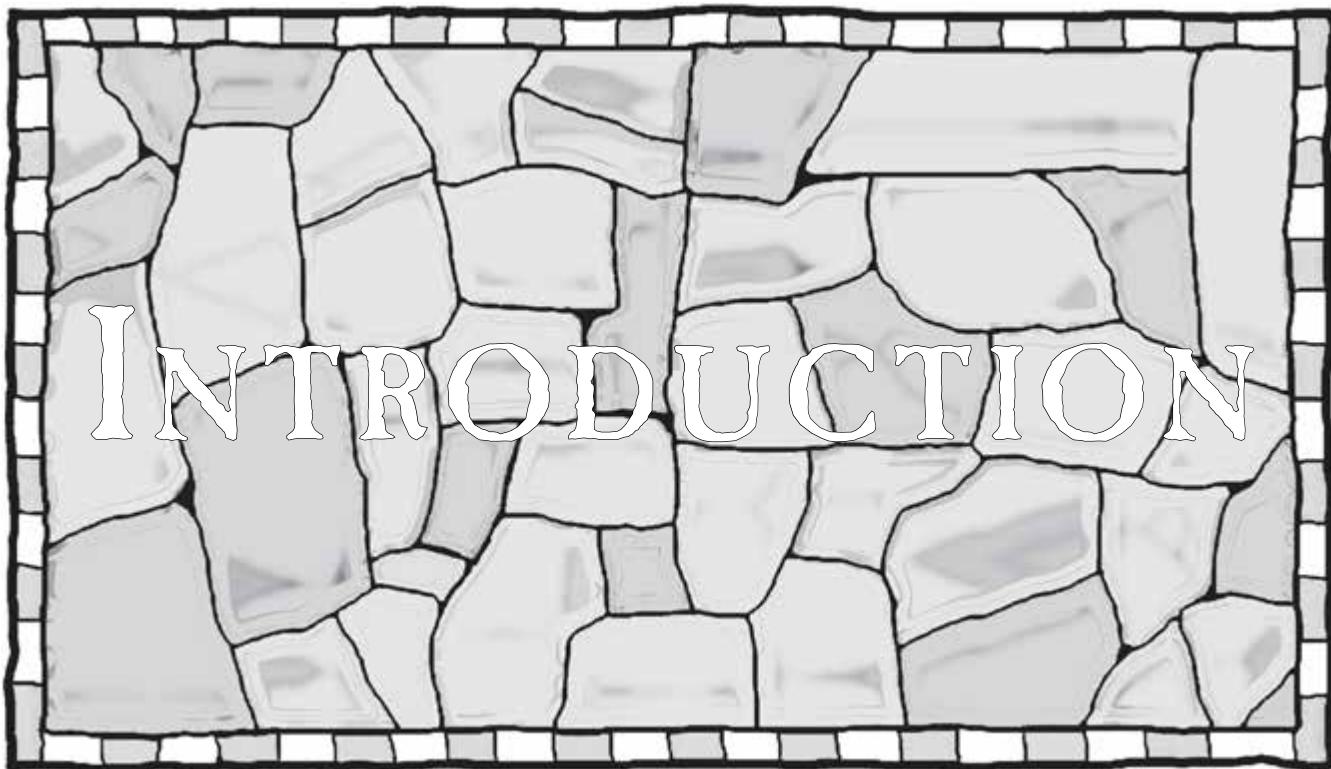
The river is within us, the sea is all bout us;
The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
Its hints of earlier and other creation.
— T.S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages"
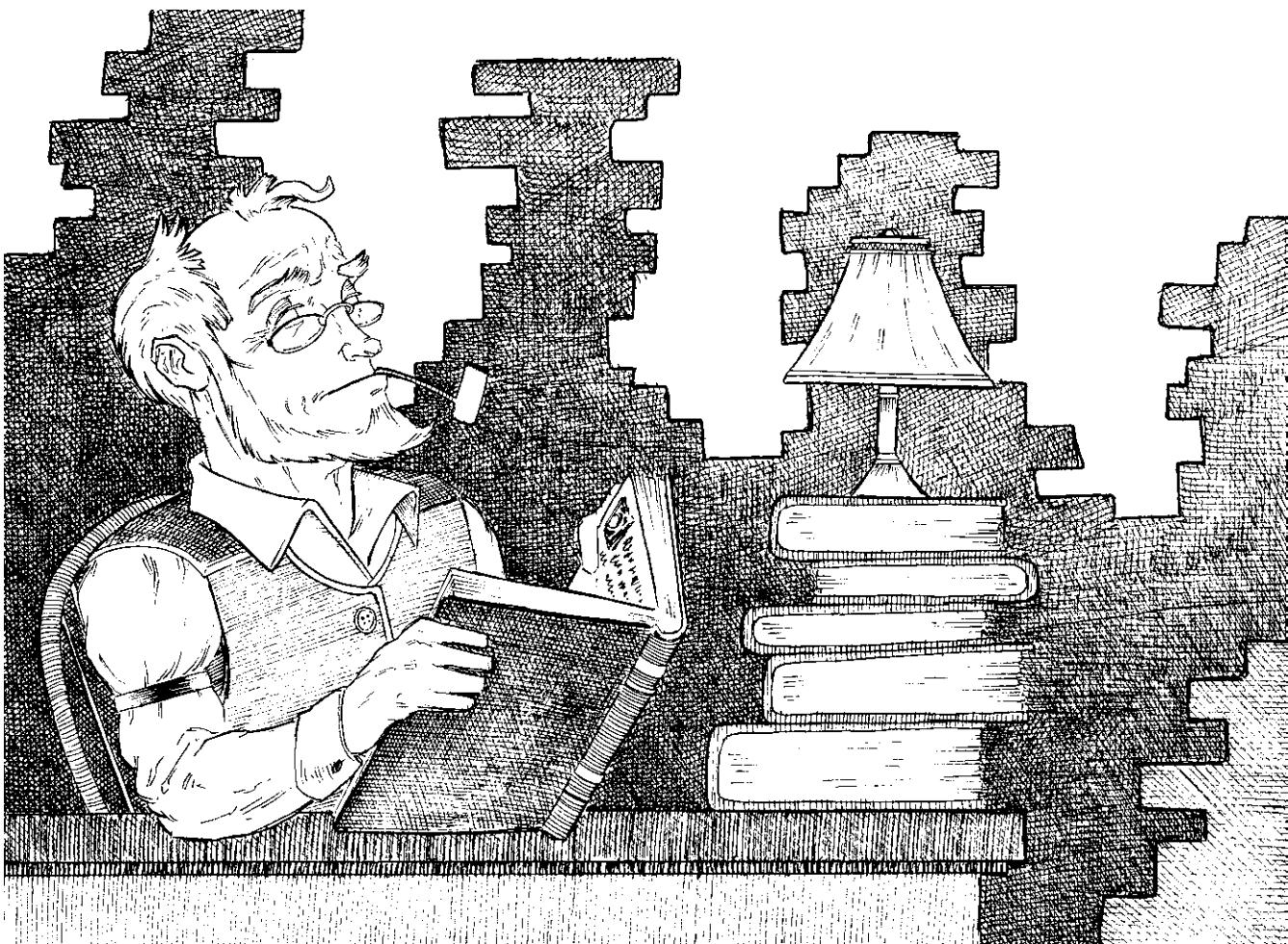
Stories, myths, legends…these are the things that **Changeling** is all about. **Changeling** offers us an opportunity to step outside our lives and experience something fantastic — to live a part of our dreams.

Unlike other types of games, roleplaying games don't necessarily have winners or losers. Yes, a character can die (which some might consider losing), or be granted a high-ranking title and retire from the active life that most player characters enjoy (others might think this to be winning). Yet in the end, it is all a part of the story, and telling stories is what **Changeling** is made for.

But all games need rules, which is what books like this are for: to help with these rules and to hopefully make things a bit easier. New rules are not rampant within the pages of this guide — rather, hints, suggestions and clarifications are presented for using the existing rules.

How to Use This Book

The following are outlines of what one can expect to find in each of the chapters.

• **Chapter One: Once upon a Time** goes into great detail concerning many aspects of telling a successful story and chronicle.

• **Chapter Two: The Storyteller's Corner** offers insights, suggestions and answers directly from the developer of **Changeling**. Questions ranging from rules to setting are answered here.

• **Chapter Three: Playing the Rules** looks at methods of eliminating dice from roleplaying whenever possible — a must for Storytellers who prefer story over die-rolling.

• **Chapter Four: Supporting Cast** details how to bring life to mortals, chimera and other World of Darkness aspects in your **Changeling** chronicle. This chapter is invaluable to any Storyteller who feels that his chronicle lacks outside influences.

• **Chapter Five: Other Places, Other Dreams** explores strange new worlds and alternate time periods for you to set your **Changeling** story. Also, it suggests a variety of backdrops and system guidelines for alternate settings.

• **Chapter Six: Observations from the Field** offers advice directly from the Storytellers in the field. A flurry of subjects are covered here, all from the perspective of individual Storytellers who have been there themselves.

• **Appendix: Indexes** provides reference indexes for all of the **Changeling** books in print through to 1997. A list of suggested books, films and music is also given.

A Reminder of the Golden Rule

The Golden Rule of storytelling is the one most often referred to in the Storyteller system, and yet, we are forced to bring it up time and time again. It is answered in books, at conventions, via e-mail, phone calls and letters. This "all important rule" is the Golden Rule; the rule that states that if you don't understand a rule, you don't like it or you just want to try something else instead, then by all means, make it up! When you play **Changeling**, it becomes your game…your story. We are here to provide you with a rich environment in which you can set your stories — not to be rules-police, who dictate exactly how much damage a changeling takes from falling out of an airplane at 30,000 feet while being shot by a high-caliber assault rifle. Just as you should not expect us to detail every variation of what happens if a vampire Embraces a changeling. These are ideas and destinies for you to determine. You should trust your judgment and proceed with what makes the best story. If it works for the story that a changeling Embraced by a vampire retains all of her memories, then go with it; nothing is stopping you.

The Gallain

Here is a list of many of the Gallain and other fae that have appeared in **Changeling** books throughout the years. A brief description of the kith (or group) is provided, as well as a reference as to what book they can be found in. None of the Thallain is described here, though Storytellers who are interested in these ultimate bad-guys can find them in **The Shadow Court**.

• **Selkies (Immortal Eyes: The Toybox)** — Beautiful and reclusive fae who live much of their time in the sea. Like the pooka, they are shapeshifters, though selkies can change only into the form of a seal. Selkies are unique among the fae because they are not reincarnated in the typical fashion; near the time of his death, each selkie passes on his "skin" to a mortal. This skin relinquishes the faerie essence to a new mortal.

• **Menehuni (Immortal Eyes: Shadows on the Hill)** — These fae can be found almost exclusively in the Hawaiian Islands. Like the Nunnehi of North America, they have close ties with the native peoples of the islands.

• **Clurichaun (Immortal Eyes: Court of All Kings)** — Found mostly in the British Isles, the clurichaun delight in storytelling, music and good drink. They are delightful and mostly avoid politics.

• **Nunnehi (The Changeling Players Guide)** — Fae native to North America. There are many different varieties of them. Nunnehi are closely tied to the land and cut off from the Dreaming, and in many ways, they share more kinship with nature spirits than they do with the Kithain.

• **Ghille dhu (Isle of the Mighty)** — Reclusive fae who dwell for the most part in the British Isles. They are linked intimately to nature and to the seasons.

• **House Scathach (Nobles: The Shining Host)** — A noble house of warriors who stayed behind during the Shattering.

CHAPTER ONE: ONCE UPON A TIME

A long time ago in a galaxy, far, far away….
— Star Wars: A New Hope

Every great story has a beginning, a middle and an end. The amazing thing about stories in roleplaying games is, while everyone knows the beginning, no one, not even the Storyteller, knows exactly what the middle or the end will be. The Storyteller has a general idea where the story might go, but nobody can say for sure. The story is created and told as the troupe plays the game, and it isn't complete until the last scene unfolds. Not only do players have the fun of seeing where the story goes like when reading a book or seeing a play, but they also have a chance to *decide* where it goes — to influence it. The Storyteller may plot out the story like a writer, but the fun of unexpected twists and turns is brought to the story by players. Hopefully, when the game is all over, the whole group has created a great story and had fun doing it.

This chapter talks about **Changeling** stories and the gaming groups who make them — how to get a group together, how to deal with the dynamics of group storytelling and how to keep things going as Storyteller so stories can become novels or even epics.

While this chapter's advice is helpful for creating and running a **Changeling** chronicle, there's really no substitute for doing. You can't learn to ride a bike from just reading a book, you need to *do* it. Understand that practice is the best teacher,

and we all make mistakes now and again. Even the greatest Storytellers and players are going to blow it from time to time. The trick is to learn from scraped knees, get back on the bike and keep peddling. It'll take you to some interesting places.

Getting Them Together

The first story is important to a chronicle because it gets characters together and sets the scene for the stories to come. It is like the opening chapter of a book, introducing the main characters and the setting in which they live. The first story should provide players with basic information they need to know about their world, their characters, and the challenges they are going to face. You don't have to put all of your cards on the table in the first game; you just have to give players a feel for their characters and their situation so they can dive right into the action.

Additionally, the prelude is an excellent tool for helping introduce players to the game. Each character goes through a mini-story that takes place even before the first story begins. The prelude might take place years before, or only a few minutes, depending on what you think best suits the story. It is a bit like a dress rehearsal, where a player has a chance to "try on"

a character for size and get a feel for being in the character's head. The prelude presents a scene or series of scenes from a character's past and lets a player get a grip on how a character reacts in different situations, as well as know some important past events. The prelude also permits the Storyteller to know in advance how a player reacts in-character. Is he quick to take offense? Is she prone to flights of fancy? These are "hooks" you can use in telling later stories.

After the prelude, a player might decide to change things about a character to better fit with how the prelude went. If a character's prelude includes a duel that she loses, leaving a chimerical scar on her fae mien, then perhaps a character needs an additional Flaw, like an Enemy. Perhaps one of the events played out in the prelude alters a player's view on her character's Legacies or Court. These aspects are all part of the fine-tuning process, permitted by having that "dress rehearsal" before the game begins, and they allow players to make changes based on the events of their preludes.

The Gathering Event

Once the preludes are complete, the Storyteller must figure out how to get all characters together — the "gathering event" of the game. Perhaps they are part of the same motley, or oathcircle, or they owe allegiance to the same noble

(who may even be a player character). In these cases, getting characters assembled is fairly easy: They're already together, which permits you to start things off right in the middle of the action without having to introduce characters to each other. Players can even play out how their characters met as part of their individual preludes. This method is the simplest for bringing them together at the beginning of the story.

Complex adventures or chronicles might call for a different gathering event. A Storyteller could engineer a suitable event to draw characters together based on their various interests and goals; a threat to the Kithain in the area where characters live or the command of the region's ruling noble can also bring a collective of characters together quickly. Such brute-force methods may leave some players feeling railroaded, especially if they have characters who are not likely to respond to a noble request or to the needs of others. So, the story must take them into account. Further, a character may have a personal motivation for being in the group that is different from what motivates the others — a seed planted for a story somewhere down the road.

Perhaps the most complex, but most potentially satisfying, means of getting a group assembled is through the workings of Dán or fate, which calls for a more free-form approach and a good deal of Storyteller preparation. Perhaps Lyle's nocker

character has a lead on a legendary treasure he sought once in his youth, while Sean's satyr character is now questing for the same treasure and needs the nocker's help. Andy's troll character has no interest in the treasure or the quest, but he discovers his old enemy is seeking it also, and it involves a debt of honor that must be repaid. Dawn's Unseelie sidhe cares nothing for the motives of the others but thinks their quest could be a useful power-play against an enemy of hers, the Unseelie foe of the troll, who is seeking the treasure, and so forth.

As the threads of the story weave in and out, characters are drawn together by circumstance to cooperate toward a mutual goal, while they might find themselves in opposition on other aspects. Tension always creates dramatic roleplaying moments between player characters.

Open-Gatherings

A daring way to start a chronicle is to let players decide how their characters get together. As Storyteller, provide a situation where characters can meet, then sit back and let players take things from there.

Of course, it's not as simple as it sounds — to run an open-gathering even with a very good group of roleplayers requires a lot of improvisation from the Storyteller to keep everything running smoothly. You must aptly know the situation that you are putting characters into. Also, have plenty of plot threads already at work behind the scenes to jump-start the story if things start to bog down.

For instance, arrange for all the characters to meet for the first time at a birthday bash for a childling noble. Some of the characters might already have reasons to talk to the others, while some must take the initiative and seek out other player characters, coming up with reasons to interact with them. Some characters could even *crash* the party so they can join in on the fun! This example can result in some very interesting and fun character interactions, but it is challenging and requires capable players and a Storyteller who knows how to handle them.

A problem with this method is having players who are not as creative or forceful as others — those who find themselves pushed into the background by more dynamic roleplayers. That's when the Storyteller must take a hand to guide events so all players have a chance to interact and get involved. Maybe the Storyteller character noble decides to settle an argument between a couple of player characters by calling on the common-sense judgment of a third player character who has been quietly watching. Perhaps a player character's paramour decides to make him jealous by flirting with the wallflower who's sitting on the sidelines.

Another problem with open-gatherings is those who refuse to take initiative or "play along" and get involved. This situation requires direct action from the Storyteller or a polite reminder for the player to get involved. Other players are helpful, too, and you can enlist them in drawing the reluctant player out. If all else fails and the group is just not coming together as it should, a dramatic event quickly electrifies things. Maybe enemies attack out of nowhere, a murder occurs, or a dramatic omen shows the player characters connected by Dán in some way. These methods are somewhat heavy-handed, but they work.

Closed Chronicles

A Storyteller may have a chronicle in mind with more defined limits than those described above. For instance, a chronicle involves a group of commoner fae who discover a lost freehold, and then they must defend it against the nobility who wish to reclaim it. In this type of setup, the Storyteller has already defined things about the types of characters in the chronicle; it is highly unlikely, for example, for someone to play a noble character unless they are an outcast, exile, or other type likely to ally with a group of commoners. Thus characters need motivations for why they would defend their freehold in defiance of the nobility.

A closed chronicle provides some additional focus; players know what to expect and what the story is about before they create their characters. However, it does limit the options that players have for making characters and directing the story, at least at first. Once the chronicle is underway, the Storyteller can naturally allow the decisions and actions of players to play a bigger part in deciding where the story goes. Maybe the commoners who take control of the freehold decide to turn it into a shelter for commoners who dislike the nobility and want to change things in the kingdom; or they like to stay out of politics altogether; or they want to turn the freehold into a haven for humans in need of faerie aid.

In setting up and running a closed chronicle, you must be very clear in describing the game's ground rules. If you don't want players to turn their new freehold into a shelter for battered mortal women, then make it clear where you think the chronicle should go. If there's a definite goal, clarify it before and during the game. Some players have no problems with closed chronicles, as they like the sense of structure, but others find restrictive storylines annoying. Find out in advance if the chronicle sounds like something players will enjoy before playing a chronicle they're not interested in. What if someone in the group really *wants* a noble character? Do you want to alter the plot to accommodate them? If not, take the player aside and explain to her how her character idea doesn't suit the story you want to run. Reach some kind of compromise.

A closed chronicle needs more prior planning on your part, since the Storyteller provides much of the story's driving force. It is somewhat easier to run if you plan out much of the plot in advance, and some of the players' choices are already made for them. Essentially, you have to know your material before bringing players into the story, and using some existing source material (see Using Source Material) makes the job easier.

Listening to Players

A Storyteller needs to *listen*. Players like to speculate on the nature of the story, which is useful information for you.

If a player says, "I bet this is true," it usually means she *wants* it to be true in one way or another. A Storyteller who pays attention to what they say can make modifications to the story to suit their ideas. A player might suggest a much better idea for a scene, character, or motivation than you originally thought up, in which case, why not use a player's idea and show her she was "right all along"? It is good for the story and makes the player feel a sense of accomplishment for guessing your cleverly laid plans!

This story adjustment lets players influence how the story unfolds and develops by more than just their characters' actions. Encourage players to speculate and throw out ideas during the game (don't allow them to cheat and control it); adding their creative input gives you and players more to draw from. A player who offers good ideas makes the game more entertaining for everyone.

To use this factor to the greatest advantage, be willing to change the story to fit the things players suggest. If you get too caught up in a particular scene or section of dialogue, players *will* change things so it won't happen. If you force the events of the game "back on track" to where you want them, players will feel cheated and robbed of their ability to make decisions affecting the game. A skilled Storyteller can sometimes "massage" a story to bring players to the scene through another route, but you must acknowledge the story isn't going to go the way you originally thought and let go of the scenes and ideas you can't do right then. Your ideas can go into a later adventure or maybe they just don't work at all, but in their stead is a whole new range of possibilities created by players.

Players tend to voice what they want for their characters. Take heed if a player says, "Wouldn't it be great to visit a fête at the Shadow Court?" The player is expressing a desire for a particular story, which you, the Storyteller, can provide. Take note of things said and you will have no lack of ideas of where to take players in the next story.

An excellent way to use players as a creative resource for the chronicle is to introduce a random new plot element, something you have no particular plans for, and to let players speculate and talk amongst themselves about what they think it is. It might be a mysterious stranger, a vague omen, or a treasure with unknown powers. Listen to the ideas players come up with; you might hear an excellent one. Then work the idea into the overall story. You obtain the benefit of a new plot thread and players get something that interests them, plus the bonus of being right and guessing one of your clever plots!

If players spend the majority of their time talking during the game, trying to stay one step ahead of you, making lots of guesses about what waits around the next corner and which dastardly villain is behind their latest troubles, congratulations! That indicates you're doing a great job of engaging their interest and thus bringing players into the game. If you pay attention to what they say, you can turn things right back around and make some of the speculation come true, which brings us to the next responsibility of the Storyteller: preparation.

Preparation

"The figure steps from the shadows and says, 'So, we meet at last.' He pulls back his hood to reveal…um, wait a second. It's, um, hang on, I've got the name right here somewhere…"

— a certain Storyteller (who shall remain nameless, so to speak)

Storytelling, like other things, is nine parts preparation and one part perspiration. Just as actors rehearse and rehearse, and artists make sketches and models before tackling the finished work, a Storyteller needs preparation to run a game. Preparation is doing the toughest work of the game beforehand, so you can concentrate on telling the story during game-play without worrying about all the little details — because you've already gotten them out of the way.

The amount and type of preparation depends on the Storyteller: Some function best with notes, while others prefer extensive maps, dialogue and notebooks full of game materials. Whatever your style is, there are certain things to keep in mind when preparing to run a **Changeling** game.

The first is *be prepared*. Few Storytellers are capable of running a good game totally off the cuff, but they are an incredibly rare breed. Think of how much better such an amazing Storyteller would be with just a *little* preparation! Lack of preparation shows. Nothing spoils a game faster than a Storyteller who doesn't have a firm grasp on what is going on. A story can come to a grinding halt if the Storyteller forgets the name of a major villain and is forced to spend time digging through his notes for it. After that, the climax of the adventure has become anti-climactic. Don't let it happen to you.

The second element of preparation is *organization*. You don't have to have neatly labeled and tabbed folders for every scrap of paper used in your chronicle, but you should be able to lay your hands on whatever character sheet, reference book or handout you need with a minimum of fuss and fumbling. If you need to refer to game books during a game, they bookmark or tab the important pages and highlight crucial passages so you can find them easily. Make up "cheat sheets" of important rules and statistics and clip them to the Storyteller's screen or keep them in front of you.

The third element is *know your characters*. Take the time to review players' character sheets before each game and note any changes they have made that might affect your story. There is nothing worse than having a finely crafted plot totally derailed by a Skill or Ability you didn't know a character had. The same applies to your Storyteller characters; know their abilities, their motivations and their mannerisms. Players tend to have an eye for detail and are always on the lookout for inconsistencies that might be clues to some fiendish plot (even if you don't have one in mind). If one of your Storyteller characters always walks with a limp and then he suddenly doesn't, it sticks out.

Script vs. Notes

When setting up a story, decide if you are going to use a script style or a notes style for writing down your material. Scripts are far more detailed but tend to lack flexibility. Notes are just the opposite: flexible but often lacking in detail. As Storyteller, you must find a happy medium that works for you and the players.

A script for the Storyteller is much like one for a movie or a stage play: It contains detailed descriptions of everything in the story, a set scene-list with samples of dialogue, descriptions of locales, maps and other minutiae that characters encounter. While scripts are useful for giving depth and detail to a story, you lose a lot of the effort that goes into a script when players gloss over, change or ignore sections of it.

Few Storytellers want to put the energy into a story that goes into creating a published game sourcebook. As a Storyteller, your only audience is your players, who are also like the actors in a play. However, unlike those actors, players want to make up their own dialogue and decide their own actions — *just* like some actors, actually. So, a script can quickly become a straitjacket for the story. If you refuse to deviate from the script, regardless of what players do, you become inflexible and the players end up feeling frustrated.

Rather than provide a set scene-list in a specific order, notes have a general series of events with enough information on how those events might change based on characters' actions. Good notes describe who the main nonplayer characters are, their motivations, and what is happening in the story. Players can then enter the story and influence how it flows, changing some scenes and encountering others.

How defined the notes are depends on how comfortable you are with coming up with details on the fly. Many Storytellers like to have cheat sheets of names of people and places to throw out at a moment's notice if a player really wants to know the name of that cashier at the Kwik-E-Mart. Random tables of personality traits, or even a deck of tarot or playing cards, provide a way to rapidly come up with personality traits and motivations for random characters who crop up.

Improvisation

No matter how detailed a Storyteller's notes or script is, players always find something you haven't thought of in advance, throwing your planned story off-balance and requiring you to improvise. The ability to do this quickly and smoothly is a skill that comes with time and practice. Really knowing your characters and your story helps a great deal. If you have a good feel for a certain character's personality, you will know what he would do in a situation. When something unexpected happens, quickly decide how the Storyteller character reacts. It helps if you get into the heads of your Storyteller characters, just as you would for a character you would run as a player, and ask: What motivates them? How do they handle the unexpected? What would she do if this happened?

To get a feel for improvisation, you must just do it. And storytelling presents plenty of opportunities. Have characters interact with the player characters one-on-one in a social setting to get the hang of improvising dialogue and reactions. Learn your material and use it as a springboard for your imagination.

The basic keys to improving a game are:

• Don't panic. It isn't life or death, it's just a game. Act as if you planned it that way all along and amaze players with your ability to anticipate them.

• Trust your instincts; go with your gut feeling. If a scene seems to be going the wrong way, then it probably is. Trust yourself.

• Let players help. Players have to improvise all the time because they usually have no idea what's going to happen next. Being a player can help develop your improv skills, and listening to players can give you ideas for how to improvise what happens next.

Using Source Material

Being a Storyteller can be a lot of work. Doing the detail work beforehand can save you a lot of headaches, but it doesn't always seem that way when you just don't have time to work out a detailed description of every element you want in your story. Storytellers have to balance exacting detail with the amount of time they have to invest.

This point is where the published source material comes in handy. Others have already done much of the work for you by writing game books with fully developed characters, plots, places and events you can use in your own chronicle. *How* you use the material is still up to you, however. Some problems with using source materials are becoming too attached to existing material, overusing it, and depending on it.

The first problem comes from the fact that game sourcebooks and published stories are like novels or plays with one difference: They have setting, plot, supporting characters, even dialogue but, unlike novels or plays, they have no main characters in them. Players create the main characters and the author and developer of the game book have no way of knowing characters or requirements of your chronicle. Only *you* know that. Very few game books work without any modification or "fine tuning" whatsoever. Some require a little while others need a lot — sometimes so much that you can't even use the book without completely rewriting it. In that case, create something of your own, that's maybe inspired by the existing material, but better suited to your chronicle and its players. Being too tied to what the "official" books say can be just as limiting, if not more so, than having a set script from which you refuse to deviate.

Another temptation when using published game material is to pack as much of it as you can into your chronicle or into a single session or story. Sourcebooks contain a flurry of material, enough for an entire chronicle. Take **Isle of the Mighty** as an example; it covers the entire isle of Great Britain and many of the changelings and important mages who live there, as well as legends, history, locales, and more. A Storyteller could try to do a single story involving a whirlwind tour of all the places in the book — meeting all the major Storyteller characters along the way — but such a story would certainly feel rushed

and leave players gasping for breath, without giving them time to appreciate any of the details from the book. Having too much material in a story can be worse than having too little because it distracts from the players and provides more ways in which the story can go awry.

A related problem is making the Storyteller characters from the published material more important than the player characters. Keep in mind that *the player characters are the main characters of your story*. The story is about them. No matter how interesting or well-developed the Storyteller characters might be, they are still just supporting. The player characters are the superstars of the show. Don't let the Storytellers characters show them up unless doing so provides additional drama focused on the players.

The last difficulty Storytellers encounter in using published material is becoming too dependent on it or being slavishly devoted to it. They don't create anything of their own, they just wait for the next supplement to come out. Some Storytellers refuse to deal with any part of their setting unless it's from an "official" published product. They worry what will happen if they describe an unknown area of the World of Darkness and a new book from White Wolf contradicts them. The answer is simple: nothing. No Game Police comes to your door and beats you senseless. No bolts from above smite you for deviating from the Holy Writ. In fact, you might like *your* version better than what gets published. If you don't, you can take parts of the published material you like and mix it in with your existing game in any proportion you want. Once you buy any game product (including this one), it's yours to do with as you wish. Some Storytellers limit their imaginations by what exists in print, which limits the stories they tell.

The prime benefit of game books is the inspiration they give. Even the most creative Storytellers need time to develop their ideas and grist for the creative mill, and game books can help. Published material is a useful springboard for coming up with new ideas to include. It is also a time-saver, as pre-created material can be dropped in with little or no alteration. If you need a noble character for an upcoming story and don't have time to develop one, an existing book gives the perfect character, or at least one you can use with a new paint job, a new name, and the serial numbers filed off so players don't know that you copped the new baron they just met from another book.

Further, there's no rule limiting the use of only **Changeling** material as inspiration for your game. The other sourcebooks in the World of Darkness line provide a great number of ideas for stories that may or may not include the other supernaturals. You might even find that various game products from (gasp!) other game lines are useful for instigating story ideas — along with books, television, movies, plays, magazines and, of course, real life.

Post-Game Wrap-Up

So, you've run a successful game, things went well and your players are sitting around the table talking about how they're going to spend their Experience Points and what they're going

to do next. Take a few moments now to write down some of the details of the game while they're still fresh in your mind. Jot down notes about things that happened during the story, especially loose ends that might crop up later.

Then talk to players. Ask them if they enjoyed themselves. Find out what they didn't expect, what interested them and what annoyed them. Were there any characters from the story they would definitely like to see again? Are there things they would *not* like to have happen again? The responses may surprise you. Listen carefully and take notes for future reference; they will help a great deal in planning other stories in your chronicle, and going back over your notes of the last few adventures could suggest a story waiting to be told.

The wrap-up is also a good time to plan for the next game and whether you will be playing another story in the same chronicle, or a different story or chronicle altogether. It's beneficial to find out then if players aren't going to be able to make it in advance so you can plan accordingly.

The Troupe

Building a great story depends as much on players as it does on the Storyteller and on how well they all work together. A gaming group is similar to a troupe of actors who create a performance. The Storyteller is like the director or conductor, while players are actors or musicians. The primary difference is that the troupe is not following a set script or score but improvising most of the story as it happens. This method creates some unique challenges.

Player Types

There are many different types of players, as each player has her own unique personality and reasons for playing. Hopefully, everyone is playing for fun, but players have different ideas of what "fun" is. It's important to recognize players' needs and to tailor the game to suit them so that everyone has fun. You can think of these profiles as types of player Legacies, if you will — general categories into which many players fall. Most have good and bad aspects to them, while a few are problems the Storyteller has to watch out for and deal with (see Problem Players, page 24). See if you can recognize any of your players in the categories.

• **Architect:** He wants to build things, not necessarily physical things, but to have some kind of lasting impact on the chronicle, to leave a mark behind — an achievement or a legacy. If the chronicle is one in which characters do not have the power to change things or to influence the course of events, the Architect becomes frustrated. He often creates very detailed characters and usually likes to get involved in the chronicle.

• **Combat Monsters:** They want to kick ass and take names. Unlike Fighters, Combat Monsters don't care much about the particulars of the story or developing their characters beyond the next fight. Many say things like, "I put up with enough crap in my *real* life, when I game, I kick butt. Period."

They're often fond of characters like Unseelie redcaps and trolls with massive combat skills. They regularly call upon the Wyrd or invoke the Dragon's Ire, anything that lets them fight better.

Combat Monsters can be trouble, especially if they start fights at the drop of a die, which disrupts the flow of the story and spoils the fun. The Storyteller may be able to rein-in a Combat Monster by showing a player the consequences of a character's actions. Perhaps a character has gone on a murderous spree and been placed under a geas to refrain from violence and help people in need. Ideally, the player should change his behavior of his own free will after seeing the damage he has done, but Combat Monsters are unwilling to change their stripes, in which case they become problem players.

• **Fighter:** The Fighter's greatest joy is the thrill of battle. For her, the best part of the game is a good fight. Her character tends to excel in combat and to be fairly martial in nature. The Storyteller should provide some fights in the story to keep Fighters happy. If there are no combats or, worse yet, fights that the Fighter cannot jump into, the player is not happy. Unlike the Combat Monsters, Fighters choose their fights carefully and aren't necessarily bloodthirsty, they just enjoy the challenge of combat. It is possible to reform a Combat Monster into a Fighter with some time and patience.

• **Hero:** The Hero wants to do cool things, lots of them, and go to cool places, meet cool people, get cool stuff, and generally have bunches of fun. Gaming is an escapist thing for the Hero and it doesn't get much more complicated than that. Heroes like plenty of action, along with many cool things to do and see. They are rather impulsive and leap before they look, but they are usually wise enough to proceed with caution, just so long as they get to proceed. About the worst thing you can do to Heroes is to keep cool things from happening to them, or have cool things happening to everyone *but* them.

• **Munchkin:** The Munchkin aren't little fae from Oz. It is a (somewhat derogatory) term for players who like to have the most powerful, capable, intelligent, beautiful... well, the most *everything* character in the game. They usually know how to use the rules to their advantage to make it happen. Munchkins spend hours lovingly designing their characters; they don't spend any of it on the details of a character's background and personality, however. Munchkins put their effort into the math to figure how to get the absolute maximum efficiency out of their characters' various Traits. Munchkins want to play characters who are quasi-legal in the game system or who combine the "best of all possible worlds" into one character.

There's nothing necessarily wrong with a player who wants her character to be the best at something. It enhances

a chronicle, and the Storyteller can work with and play to a player's desire for excellence. It's when players desire to be the best at *everything*, especially at the expense of other characters, is when it becomes a problem.

• **Roleplayer:** He likes the acting aspects of the game. Roleplayers create complex, detailed characters and like to play them in different situations to test a character's responses and to give them dramatic range. Some Roleplayers like tragedy, others like comedy, but all of them desire an opportunity to have their character emote and express. Roleplayers like social settings more than combat and action-scenes, but some Roleplayers will turn any scene into a roleplaying opportunity. Those who do not get enough opportunities to roleplay their characters, usually in social settings, become bored and frustrated and come up with some surprising (or annoying) ways to express their character.

• **Rules Lawyers:** These players have read every **Changeling** book from cover to cover and know exactly which page the rules for the Dolorous Blow are on, along with every other rule. It's not necessary to look them up since Rules Lawyers have already committed the rules to memory. They also know all the complex histories of the noble houses and the secrets of the various kith, and they seem to believe that their characters should, too. Rules Lawyers feel compelled to point out when the rules are not being followed (especially when other characters are concerned).

Rules Lawyers are not necessarily bad; their knowledge can be quite helpful, but the most important thing Rules Lawyers need to learn is restraint. If they can keep themselves from contradicting or arguing with the Storyteller and learn to separate their extensive knowledge of the game from what their characters should know, Rules Lawyers can be excellent players.

• **Significant Other:** Roleplaying is a social activity, so it is no surprise when members of the same troupe end up romantically involved. A Significant Other (S.O.) is usually another type of player as well, often a Tag-along (see listing), if their significant other brought them into the game. The additional concern created by an S.O. is the issue of favoritism, especially if the S.O.'s romantic interest happens to be the Storyteller. So long as everyone involved can keep the relationships between their characters in the game separate from their relationships in the real world, there's no problem.

• **Tag-along:** The Tag-along is playing because someone else asked them to. It might be a significant other, family member, or friend. The Tag-alongs aren't gamers, they're just trying things out to see what they're like, or playing because that's what everyone else they know is doing. Inside most Tag-alongs is another type of player looking to get out. The Storyteller should encourage the Tag-along to participate in the game, giving them the opportunity to enjoy themselves and find their own interest. Many Tag-alongs are also Wallflowers (see listing) who need encouragement to get them involved.

• **Thinker:** Thinkers view the game as an intellectual challenge. They like puzzles, riddles and battles of wits. They enjoy trying to stay one step ahead of the Storyteller and out-witting their opponents with some clever plan or maneuver. Thinkers can be great because they're always planning and coming up with interesting ideas for their characters and for the chronicle; however, but they can also be a challenge for Storytellers, who have to keep track of the other characters, all the Storyteller characters, sustain the plot *and* keep up with the Thinker's mental acrobatics. Thinkers get bored quickly when there is nothing to stimulate their intellect. Good Storytellers who want to keep them happy give them plenty of mental exercises.

• **Wallflower:** Wallflowers don't desire to get involved in game activity and prefer to sit on the sidelines. A Wallflower is shy, indecisive, or is bored with the game. Many are also Tag-alongs or Significant Others and not really enthused about playing in the game. The Storyteller should try to draw out Wallflowers. If all else fails, take the player aside and find out why the game isn't holding the Wallflower's interest or attention.

New Players

Every troupe eventually attracts new players. Members do leave for various reasons and new players come along to join in. "New blood" keeps a troupe engaging for everybody, but there are some things to keep in mind when bringing new players into an existing troupe, especially one that has been together for a long time.

Consider if you even *want* any new players in your chronicle. "Fresh blood" is good, but a Storyteller has a certain number in mind that is comfortable. Though some chronicles are fine with the number of players the troupe currently has. As flattering as it may be to have players knocking down your door to play in your game, there is a limit to how many a chronicle can include. Most Storytellers find six players to be a comfortable limit, any more tends to become unruly, and it's difficult to give each player individual attention. Some Storytellers prefer even fewer players, and solo- and pair-games are always an option.

Assuming there is an opening and if you want to add a new player, then how do you get them into the game? If the existing members have gamed with the new player before, there's less likely to be a problem; they know the player's style and personality, and the Storyteller probably has an idea of how well the newbie will fit in. If not, then the troupe may want to have some kind of "testing of the waters" with the new player to see if the troupe and chronicle suit her. This try-out gives the new player a chance to check everyone else out, too.

For the first game or two, ask the newbie to run an established Storyteller character. This chance provides the player an immediate "in" on the story to get right into playing, and it gives you some control over what he does in your chronicle. You can always offer suggestions like, "I'm sorry, but I don't think Sir Remillard would do that, how about something else?" Players then get acquainted with each others' styles and the new player gets to think about a character who can fit into

the troupe. If things don't work out, the chronicle continues uninterrupted and both parties can separate. If it's copasetic, the new player starts working on a new character.

Give the newbie some extra freebie points to build a character, especially if the other characters are experienced. How many points depends on how experienced the other characters are and how much you want to balance things out. Don't give a new player more points than any of the existing characters, or the current troupe players will feel cheated, having had to work to earn their experience.

Once the new player has worked out a character, the Storyteller can run a prelude, which is an excellent chance to involve the new character and to provide connections with the other characters. If so desired, you can run more than one prelude with the new player to help him "catch up" with the others. You can also bring in experienced players and involve them in the new character's prelude to create connections between them. Perhaps a current character was a mentor to the new character at one point, or a friend, lover, or enemy. When a new character who has some history with one of the other characters appears, it is somewhat like a movie flashback scene.

The Dancer from the Dance

Roleplaying engages the imagination, and many roleplayers get very involved with the stories and characters they create. It is important, however, to be able to take a step back and not get so caught up in the story that you confuse what happens in the game with reality. Do not confuse the game relationships with your real ones. Emotions can run high in some games, and it's important not to forget this is a *game* that is meant to be fun and entertaining.

Adversarial Storytelling

One way many Storytellers get too caught up in the story is when they treat the relationship between them and players as a sort of competition; the Storyteller refuses to let the player characters "win" over the Storyteller characters, no matter what they do. Such Storytellers prove their own cleverness by "defeating" players with tricks, traps and powerful adversaries. They also quickly find themselves without any players.

The Storyteller is not the players' adversary. You may take on the *role* of an adversary of the *characters* in the context of the story, but in the troupe you are all working together to create an interesting and fun story. Challenge players just as they challenge your imagination with their actions, but throwing overwhelming opposition at players isn't clever — it's boring. And it will ultimately be the death of your chronicle. As Storyteller, you control characters and forces far more powerful than those at players' disposal. This ability gives you the responsibility to wisely use the resources at your command *to further the story* in entertaining ways. With all

the characters and forces of the World of Darkness and the Dreaming at your fingertips, what's the challenge in slaughtering a group of characters? It is far more clever to come up with antagonists and events that entertain. Anyone can be a good adversarial Storyteller, but it takes skill to be a really entertaining Storyteller.

Player Conflict

Conflict can be a good thing; it is the dramatic force that drives all stories. However, conflict between player characters causes problems in any troupe.

If players are mature and able to separate their characters from their real-world selves and personalities, there shouldn't be a problem. Yet, some roleplayers get very attached to their characters and may even interpret attacks on their characters as attacks on themselves. Roleplayers also tend to be competitive, and a conflict between two players can escalate as each side tries to do her best to "win."

The simplest solution, if you feel players can't handle it, is to minimize the amount of player-character conflict. Don't let players create characters who are likely to conflict with each other, and unite characters against common enemies who far outweigh their petty personal conflicts. When conflicts among players arises, remind them again that it's all just a game and they shouldn't hold each other responsible for their characters' actions — provided those actions were in-character.

Conversely, if you think players *can* handle conflict between their characters, go for it! Conflict is the most dramatic and powerful force in a story and makes for some fun roleplaying. If players involved are mature enough, they can glare daggers at each other, make terrible threats, or engage in a duel at the gaming table but still walk away smiling and friendly. Such rivalries are where great stories spring from.

Problem Players

Problems, and problem players, do occur during roleplaying and the Storyteller must deal with them. Most of the time, you can solve these problems by talking to the players involved. Take them aside during a break or after the game and tell them how you see the situation. Ask what you can do. If it involves some aspect of game-play, like a rules interpretation or a plot complication, you may have to make a decision about what is best for your chronicle. Whatever you decide, stick to it. Tell players how you feel and try to work things out with them.

If there is a personality conflict with a particular player, talk to him and try to convince him to work it out himself. Players should try and keep their personal differences out of the game, and it's not your job to play counselor or therapist. However, if a player's personal issues are disrupting the game and affecting the rest of the troupe, you have to at least discuss it with him.

The Last Resort

"I don't know about Chris," Lyle sighs. "He's just so annoying." Everyone else nods and grumbles noises of agreement. "I just can't stand gaming with him anymore, he makes it so it's no fun for anyone, can't you talk to him?"

"I tried," Steve says. "I don't think he gets it."

"Well, I really can't play in the same chronicle with him anymore," Lyle replies. Several of the other players nod their heads in agreement.

"OK," Steve says. "I'll talk to him again."

It's a tough call, but the Storyteller may have to ask a player to leave the chronicle, or to leave the troupe entirely. This duty must not be taken lightly, but if a single player is ruining everyone else's fun and you've tried everything you can to get him to understand or fix the problem, then there may not be another option.

Be honest with the player, but not brutal. Take him aside again and tell him you feel his playing style just isn't suited to your chronicle or troupe, and that it would be better for all concerned if you simply parted ways. You don't have to provide a blow-by-blow list of transgressions, just stick to the facts and be firm. He will hopefully understand and concede with a minimum of fuss or trouble. Don't get into an argument with him over the decision; keep things mature.

Do not resort to childish or petty techniques such as trying to force him out of your troupe or tricking him into leaving or, worse yet, ostracizing him and hoping he gets the hint. These methods do a disservice to everyone in the troupe and engender some hurt feelings. If you are going to have the courage to stand up to chimerical dragons and Unseelie monsters in a game, you should have the guts to talk honestly to a member about how everyone feels.

Silliness

Let's face it, sitting around a table with a bunch of dice and pieces of paper, while pretending to be faeries living in a Gothic-Punk version of our own world is pretty silly. But there's nothing wrong with it! Silliness is as much a part of roleplaying as anything, and it can give a welcome relief from scenes of high-tension and drama. Laughter and play are important parts of the nature of the Kithain and should be meaningful components of playing **Changeling**.

The only trouble you may have with silliness is when it runs counter to the mood you're trying to create. If you have a scene of high-drama happening and everyone is in a silly mood that night, things aren't going to work out as you planned. You can sometimes reclaim a dramatic or serious story from silliness, but the easiest thing is to go with the flow and change the story to accommodate the silly atmosphere. Play out a funny or silly scene to let everyone have fun and get it out of their systems. If you have time, go back to your serious plot and try again, or put it aside for a better time. It helps when you have a feel for players and their moods; if you walk into a game and it looks like a silly night, don't start off with a very serious scene.

Silliness can also be a welcome change from too much drama and oh-so-serious roleplaying. If you've had a lot of very serious and dramatic stories lately, think about throwing some

light-heartedness in as a change of pace to lift the mood. Too many serious stories can lead to everyone taking the game too sternly and forgetting the whole point of roleplaying: to have fun. Have a pooka or two enlist characters in playing a prank on someone or get characters involved in a "war of pranks" with a group of pooka. If any of the inhabitants of the World of Darkness understand humor and fun, it is the Kithain, so take advantage of it.

Have Fun

The material in this book can be a whole lot to keep in mind all at once. Yet, the most important thing to remember is the Golden Rule of Storytelling: Have lots of fun, and make things as fun as possible for everyone else. As long as you keep this rule in mind, you're never going to miss the mark. If something in the game isn't fun for you or your troupe, change it! If something *is* fun, even if it's not "official" or "proper" roleplaying (whatever the hell *that* is), do it anyway! As said before, the Game Police are not watching you, and White Wolf isn't going to take your storytelling rights away for not playing the game "right."

On a similar issue, if the game isn't fun for you, stop for a while. Even if your players are enjoying themselves, if you dread running another session and view your storytelling duty as more of a chore than a hobby, it's time for a break. Everyone needs a little vacation and even the best chronicles get stale when run constantly.

Rather than running the chronicle when you'd rather not and inadvertently taking your frustrations out on players, take some time off and recharge your creative batteries so you can come back fresh. Take as much time as you need. You might need a week of playing instead of storytelling, or see a movie or two instead of gaming. Get outside. Go out. Read a book. You may be dedicated to your chronicle and are reluctant to take a break even when you know it's driving you crazy — but if it's not fun anymore, why keep doing it?

Ongoing Chronicles

"In the end? Nothing ends, Adrian. Nothing ever ends."
— Alan Moore, *Watchmen*

After a few games, players begin telling you their characters' long-term plans. You're weaving different plot threads in and out of your games and creating new plots for them. Congratulations, you've got a full-fledged chronicle on your hands — now, don't panic. This is a good thing. Once you have a couple of adventures under your proverbial belt and you have players truly involved and interested, it's time

PHILLIPS
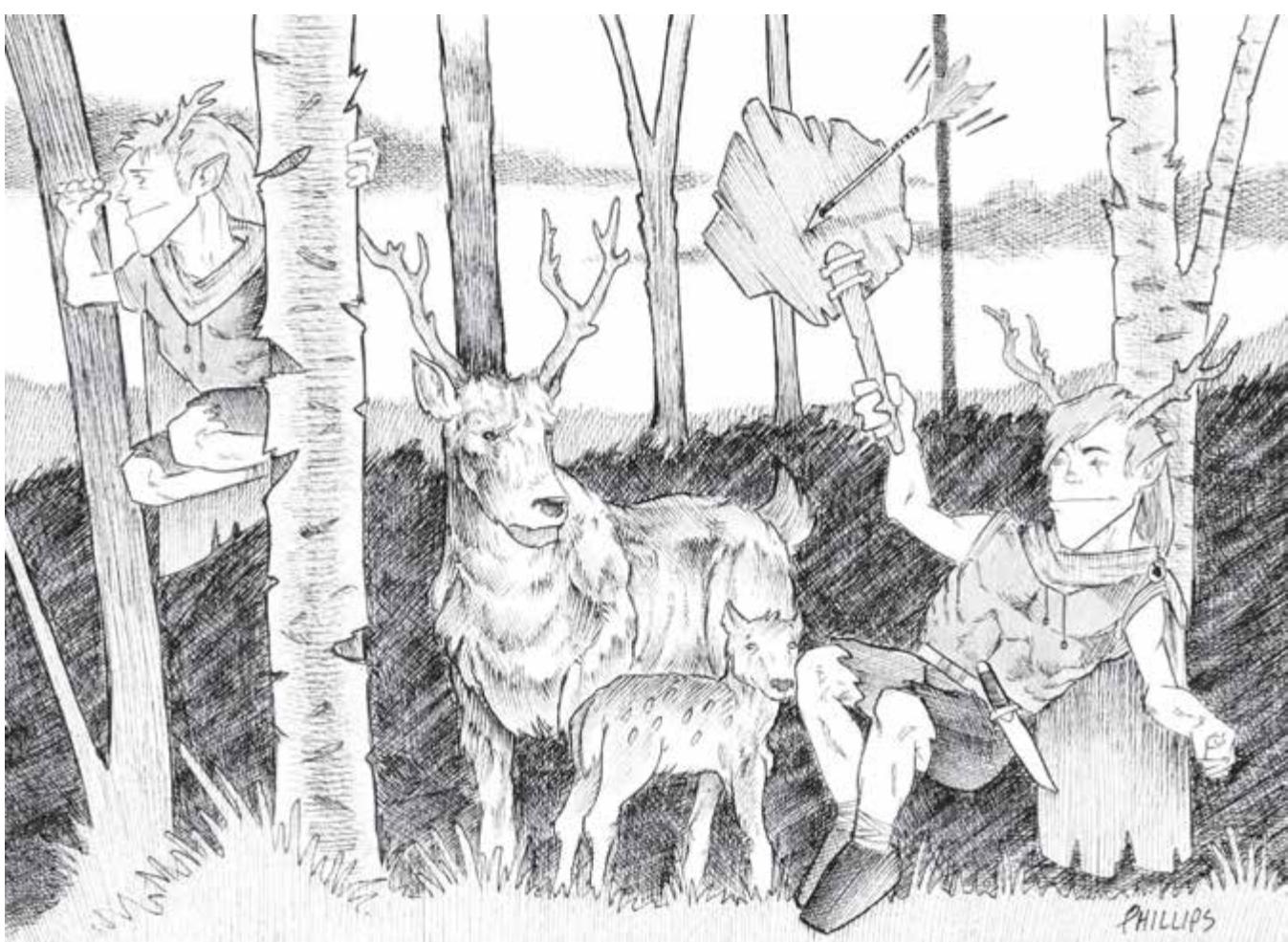
to consider other things about storytelling that make your chronicle even better.

The Never-Ending Story

In its most basic form, a chronicle is nothing more than a series of stories linked in some way, usually by common characters and themes. It can be very complex and subtle, if you let it. If a single story is like a TV show or magazine serial, then a chronicle is the whole series. It can be loosely connected, like some of the Saturday-morning serials, or tightly woven together, like a fantasy epic.

Now, you're ready to explore further into the Dreaming and the World of Darkness. You and the players are familiar with the basics and feel more at ease with the game. You know both the player characters and the rest of your diverse cast, and players are developing plot threads of their own. You might not be ready for a huge, world-spanning epic yet, but you are ready to add some additional spice.

Player Input

A key element in developing a successful chronicle is to listen to the players, for they are as much creators of the chronicle as you are. You set the stage, play the other parts and describe the action, but it is players' decisions and actions that decide which way things go. If you swipe that decision-making power out of players' hands, you've taken away a very important facet of the chronicle, and players become frustrated and discouraged.

Allowing player input into the game provides a richer, more engaging story for everyone, including you. Who wants to know how everything is going to end before it even begins? If you offer players power to do what they want, they'll give you plenty of twists and turns that you never expected. There are two main parts to player input and both are valuable: player comments and feedback, and player actions.

Let's discuss the latter one first. The actions of the player characters, of course, have a very direct effect on the story. Players control the main characters, so naturally, what they choose to do matters. If it doesn't matter, then players are *not* controlling the main characters, and the story isn't really theirs. Unless part of the theme of the chronicle is for players to feel helpless (not a very fun story), you have to give some decision-making to the players.

This task is one of the hardest for a Storyteller. After carefully crafting a complete setting and a complex plot, you have to introduce the random element of players to your perfect story and give them the power to possibly wreck it. However, it's no different from the unspoken agreement that players have with you; they take their developed characters, with detailed backgrounds and goals, and place them into the environment you have created — where you have the power to kill them or even erase them from existence. The trick is to achieve enough trust between you and players that you are confident they won't destroy your story, and that they know you won't kill their characters randomly.

Things in the game *will* change, however. No plot survives contact with the player characters unchanged. No matter how well you know your players, there's no way to know for sure what they will do or what will happen during the game. If a player comes up with something unexpected that turns your plot upside-down, you have to go with the flow and morph your storyline to fit it. If you planned a climactic throne-room confrontation with an Unseelie assassin, for example, and a clever player figures out who the assassin is long before the final confrontation, don't configure circumstances so the assassin escapes to confront characters in the throne-room. Reward players for their ingenuity and either drop the throne-room scene or decide the assassin had an accomplice who intends to avenge his death or capture — or something to that effect.

By changing the story, players don't ever need to know you didn't plan it that way all along. Even though you know you planned for a certain scene or plot thread and the players just derailed it, if you make adjustments to the story smoothly and quickly, the players will never see a break — it will seem like a continuous whole. A mark of a great Storyteller is that they make everything look as if they planned it that way from the start.

Allowing player actions to influence the game can presents interesting plot developments not even thought of before. Let's say you include a treasure, a magical sword for example, in a story with the idea of the troll player character, who is a powerful warrior, picking it up. Yet, the sluagh player character, who has no combat proficiency, finds and keeps the sword. Your plot suddenly took a haphazard turn. What will the sluagh do with the sword? What if someone comes looking for it? What if the sword is an intelligent chimera that the sluagh can talk to? What if there is a wraith tied to the sword in some way? Perhaps it holds some valuable secret the sluagh can uncover, but it may anger the troll character. A series of new possibilities presents itself because of the actions of one player.

When the Storyteller does not keep tight control over the plot, but lets players affect it, the story always grows and changes in ways that nobody expected. That's half the fun!

Everyone's a Critic

Player input in a chronicle comes from feedback about what they like and *don't* like about the game and the story. For some players, this input comes in the form of open, clear communication and constructive criticism, while others relay their likes and dislikes in subtler ways. In either case, it's the Storyteller's job to listen to the feedback offered and to incorporate it into the chronicle. You don't have to agree with everything players say, but you have to listen. Ignoring the input of players is a sure way to end up with no group at all.

Ideally, the Storyteller should respond to the players, which should offer honest, constructive criticism on the game in return. A player who doesn't say anything about the game has no right to complain when it doesn't go how he wants. You are not a mind-reader and can't include things about which players haven't told you. Conversely, players may not be as forthcoming with information as others are; draw them out and try to find out what they are thinking. Such players

express their interest or displeasure in the way they play; if they seem very enthusiastic about something, they are probably interested, but if their and energy in the game appear low, find out the reason. They might have had a bad day or something is bothering them that is not your business.

The creation of a successful chronicle, of course, is a collaborative effort of the troupe as a whole. So, take the input of players seriously and create the sort of stories they want to see, and they will reward you and the chronicle with their enthusiasm and creativity.

Theme

This concept can be an elusive one for Storytellers. Some give it far too much thought and thus skimp on telling a good story, while others give no thought to theme and then tell inconsistent, crappy stories. The best way is to find a happy medium between the two.

Theme asks, "What is your chronicle like?" Is it happy and light-hearted, or does an imminent sense of doom hang over everything? Is there a lot of pomp and circumstance or play and silliness? Does the story address more mature themes, or are things kept "PG"? Does it favor action over social roleplaying, or vice versa?

So, theme encompasses many questions. You set the basic tone of the chronicle as Storyteller, and you are aided by the troupe's feedback. You can run a grim and gritty chronicle, but if none of the players wants to play in one, you have a problem. Likewise, if your players all want a silly game and you feel uncomfortable running one, then consider compromising.

Setting a chronicle's tone is important because it lays down some of the "ground rules" for what players can expect from the story. Just like we expect different stories from a romance novel as opposed to a modern techno-thriller, so do players expect different things from a romantic chronicle versus an action chronicle. That's not to say the romantic one doesn't involve slaying a dragon or two, or the action chronicle doesn't have any romantic interludes, but the overall tone of the two chronicles is contrasting, and it colors all other events and plot threads.

Mature Themes

The World of Darkness has the potential for dealing with some themes considered "adult" or sensitive to some players, especially young players. One of your responsibilities as Storyteller is finding out what themes players are comfortable with and not pushing them too far into situations that they find offensive or uncomfortable.

For example, themes of lost childhood innocence can lead to stories about abuse children suffer at the hands of adults and even from other children. It is a very sensitive subject for many and should not be treated lightly. If all players are willing, it can form the basis for a powerful and moving story, but not if a player has strong personal issues with it. Likewise, the theme of courtly love and the horny nature of many fae (especially satyrs) brings up questions of sex. Find out how the troupe wants to handle sexual situations in the context

of the story. Are they mature enough to handle sex issues? Will certain topics make people uncomfortable?

If it's something a player wouldn't be willing to see a movie about, it's probably not a fit topic for game-play. But, if the troupe is fine with that particular mature theme, it might add depth and drama to the chronicle. Use your best judgment.

Using the Senses

"You see, but you do not observe."

— Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "Scandal in Bohemia"

As Storyteller, you are the senses of the players; it's your job to help evoke the mood of the scene. Good description that appeals to multiple senses helps you paint the picture and brings them right into the game world with you. Don't describe things in terms nobody uses (like hex-grids or precise measurements), and don't skimp on detail that can bring the setting to life ("It's a warehouse on the docks.").

As Sherlock Holmes reminds us, many people see but few observe. Most people are strongly visual, but they just don't tell players what their characters see, or what sounds they hear, how things feel to the touch, how they smell, how they taste (like the flat, metallic taste of blood in your mouth after taking a punch). Instead of just "a warehouse on the docks," make it "an old, crumbling warehouse of muddy red brick." And add on: "The wind is cold and it smells strongly of the dark sea. The warehouse's dim lights flicker through holes where windows used to be. Seagulls scream overhead as the foghorn lets out a mourning tone in the mist."

When describing people, go beyond their physical appearance. Include details such as the sound of their voice, the smell of their perfume or other odors (like a nocker mechanic smelling strongly of exhaust and grease). Also, consider their mannerisms: Do they avoid eye contact? What is their posture like? Do they have an accent? What about their expression? Is their skin rough or smooth? Do they perspire a great deal or stay dry in the worst heat? Giving characters a few traits like these can make them stand out to players, thus making them more memorable. Resist the urge to overload a character with singular traits. Several well-chosen ones usually do the trick.

Naturally, changelings have senses beyond those of most mortals. The Kithain live in two worlds: the mundane and the chimerical. Do not neglect the magical senses of characters in your descriptions, and consider the differences between the ordinary world and the fantastic world of the Dreaming. Don't just tell players how the sensations of the Dreaming are so much more intense than those of the mundane world, *show* them by describing them that way. While a piece of fabric in the ordinary world is "silky," a chimerical cloth might be "as soft as a spider's web." Everything in the Dreaming should be more intense than in the mundane world.

Changelings sense things humans cannot, so describe the uplifting tingle of Glamour in the air, like a charge of static electricity before a storm. Talk about the cold weight of Banality pressing down on a place or a person like a layer of sodden snow or heavy iron chains. Mention the sparkle in the eyes of a pooka, the dark depths of the eyes of an eshu or the glint of madness in those of a fae sliding toward Bedlam. The Dreaming is a world rich in metaphor, so use them.

The Storyteller, however, should avoid describing to players how their characters feel. Everyone resents this. Give players the description of what their characters sense and let *them* decide how their characters feel about it. You can give cues, if you like, through the reactions of Storyteller characters, but try to eschew imposing feelings on them unless that's exactly what the situation calls for. Then the players know something is up when you tell them they're feeling frightened —some power of Glamour is at work. The feeling is then special, not just part of the routine description.

Don't can go too far with these descriptions. Part of the trick of giving good sensory impressions for players is learning how to use a kind of "sensory shorthand" that conveys many impressions in a fairly short description. Don't get into every detail of something; try to paint your scenes with broad strokes. Use archetypes and stereotypes to your advantage so players can immediately grasp what you're talking about. There's nothing wrong with saying, "When you walk into the throne-room, it's like the final scene from *Star Wars*, with row upon row of Kithain in armor and court garb lined up to honor you." It gives players an immediate impression without excessive detail. If players seem to be getting bored or their eyes start to glaze over, you're overdoing it and should move the story along.

Special Treats

Even "serious" roleplayers with well-developed characters and an interesting, complex chronicle need to take a break, which is true of the most devoted Storyteller. Every once in a while, break up the routine with special stories that break the proverbial mold and provide a little mindless fun. **Changeling** is perhaps the easiest Storyteller game in which to do this kind of story, for the Dreaming is a place of endless possibility and a great deal of Glamour comes from some childish play.

A good source of these special events is the changeling holidays noted on pages 81-83 of **Changeling: The Dreaming**, like Carnival and Samhain, when the normal bounds of reality change. Maybe on Carnival you want to have a story where everything and everyone turns topsy-turvy in the characters' world, and they become kings or nobles for a day. Yeah, they are asked to rule their "kingdom," which leads to all kinds of wacky pronouncements and problems. Maybe you want to hold a costume party on Halloween for players, which can turn into a live roleplaying event based around their changeling characters. What about presents around Yule and birthday celebrations? Changelings *love* presents, and an interesting gift could be a good jumping-off point for a story or two.

Extra Touches

There are plenty of little extra touches that the Storyteller can add to a game session to help make it more entertaining. You don't have to use all (or any) of these ideas, but you and your players might like them a whole bunch. At least try them.

The Toybox

An element that can add mountains to players' experience of the game world is prop use. Even though you might be able to expertly describe a particular map or letter, it is much better if you actually hand it to them to look at. The same is true of other kinds of props and hand-outs. Here are a few:

• **Maps and Floor Plans:** Maps can offer an excellent visual overview of a place and inspire a lot of ideas, both when planning a story and while playing in one. A good atlas of the area where your chronicle takes place is a worthwhile investment, as are maps, books on houses and different types of buildings — especially castles and places fae are likely to encounter in the Dreaming. Some of the data and pieces of trivia from these maps can stimulate other ideas for your game. For example, are there any places of the map whose names suggest a fae influence? Perhaps they could be former or current freeholds, or places where the Kithain dwelled in ages past. Also, don't forget the entertainment value of a hand-drawn treasure map that characters can follow to see if "X marks the spot."

• **Puzzles and Tricks:** Changelings are tricksters and puzzle masters, so collect good riddles, puzzles and wiles to include. If characters get challenged to a riddle game, have a few on hand for them. If you find a cool puzzle box or other such toy, think about incorporating it into a game with a certain clue or treasure hidden inside it. Secret messages written on goblin parchment, codes, cryptic bits of lore and other such ideas are the stuff of mystery in a **Changeling** chronicle.

• **Letters and Documents:** Likewise, you can prepare correspondence to the player characters as props that they can read and re-read during the game, as well as keep in their personal journal or treasure box (see listing). Use parchment paper or colored construction paper that suits the feel you're going for. Although we all can manage to copy a childling's scrawl with a crayon, it is a bit more difficult to simulate the fine, flowing script of a sidhe noble. Fortunately, desktop publishing provides opportunities to create great props. If you have a computer with a script-style font and a printer, you can create authentic-looking letters and documents for players. Add an extra touch by using sealing wax (available at paper/stationery stores) and pieces of bright ribbon to seal letters, and deliver them to players during the game. Acquire or create unique seals for the important Storyteller characters. It's worth it; imagine players' reactions when they see and recognize the seal of High King David on a letter you've just handed them!

• **Pictures:** Most people are visual and a picture is worth more than a thousand words. Start a collection of interesting pictures, photographs and illustrations that you can use as props. If you see a picture that looks just like your image of a certain place, object or character, clip it out and show it during the game to spark imaginations. For those with access to the Internet, the World Wide Web is a limitless source of "downloadable" pictures that you can save to your hard-drive, then paste onto different game props. Old family photos, while they should be treated with care, are excellent props from a bygone era. Magazines and newspapers have copious pictures and props for your chronicle, especially some of the outlandish ones found in supermarket tabloids. Imagine handing players a clue in the form of a *Weekly World News* article about a woman kidnapped by aliens; perhaps she was really enchanted and given a good scare by a group of Unseelie pooka as part of an elaborate joke.

Additionally, if you (or a player) happen to have some artistic talent, consider drawing pictures of the player characters, props, and other minutiae. Such illustrations can really help to bring something to life in players' minds.

• **Treasures:** Consider all the little knickknacks you come across in your day-to-day existence and how one or more of them could play the role of a treasure. Maybe you see a piece of costume jewelry or old clothing in an antique shop or thrift store, or you clean out your attic or basement and find toys, books and other "treasures." Pass these on to players when they find something in their adventures. It can be damn effective to tell a player "you find this" and hand her an actual object rather than just describing it. Let the player hold the treasure, look it over and play with it; she will draw her own conclusions.

Be careful when using treasures in a game that have actual value to you or someone else in the real world. Accidents happen and toys get broken sometimes, so it's best not to use a valuable or precious token as a prop unless you're prepared to lose it.

• **Quotes:** Players (and Storytellers) do come up with choice bits of dialogue on the spur of the moment. Take a second to jot down some of the better quotes that are said during the game and save them for future reference. A good quote might become famous (or infamous) to you all, or come back to haunt the player at some later point. Quotes can lend consistency to certain characters (if they use the same phrase, for example), and mentioning some of the choice quotes from the last game at the beginning of the next one helps set the mood to get players into the spirit of things.

• **Diaries and Treasure Boxes:** Encourage players to keep and create props for their own characters to enhance the game. Here are two good examples.

A diary or journal is a record kept by a character, where a character records his deepest thoughts and feelings. Writing a character journal, even if no one else ever reads it, gives a player a humongous deal of insight into his character's nature and thus many ideas for how to play that character. Of course, the real fun is making the diary an actual item in the chronicle that other characters (player and Storyteller) find and read for themselves. Perhaps a nosy sluagh has gotten hold of a diary and is using the secrets in it against a character, or maybe a character has recorded a forbidden love affair in her diary and it is the only evidence that can save her falsely accused lover of some random crime. Does she produce the diary to save her love, exposing their secret? What if her lover's enemies know about the diary, too?

A diary can also be a kind of in-character blue-book, where the player writes down stories and momentos about her character, from a character's point of view, with the Storyteller's approval. It can flesh out a character greatly and is fun reading for everyone!

Treasure boxes are collections of various treasures, keepsakes and momentos that changelings seem to accumulate: props and treasures handed out by the Storyteller during the game, along with other things donated by the player to give his character life. A treasure box can hold photographs, jewelry, knickknacks, stuffed animals, records, tapes or CDs, drawings, maps, storybooks, collections of colored string or rubber bands, origami sculptures — nearly anything a character would have and keep. Creative players with the right resources can even create portraits, fake newspaper and magazine clippings and other props to add to their character's treasure box. If the box includes items a character keeps on his person, the player can use them as bunks during the game or as props for live roleplaying.

• **Episode Guides:** Keeping records of games and stories is helpful to the Storyteller, and it can also be enjoyed. Create a short summary of each game with players' help, give it a fun title and keep it in a binder for everyone to look over. Keeping such a record alerts you to hanging plot threads and it inspires adventures, such as when a player flips through the episode guide and says, "Hey, remember that story involving the Shadow Court? We should meet those guys again."

The Playroom

Along with crafting things to help bring the story to life, don't overlook the real-world game setting. Games are much more fun when everyone is comfortable, and the setup of the gaming area (the "playroom") is crucial.

• **Music:** The right music aids in setting the scene and getting everyone enthused about the game. A quick glancing through of almost any **Changeling** book conveys the favorite band(s) of the game-authors, but naturally, you can choose any music that will evoke the mood you are going for. If you have a programmable CD-player and a remote control, set up music for different scenes and moods and thus create your own game soundtrack.

Music can be distracting if it's too loud, or if it's incorporated at all. Experiment with your group, but if the use of music doesn't enhance play, don't use it.

• **Lights:** Try to balance atmosphere with practicality. Everyone needs to be able to see their character sheets, dice, and books during play, so keep the lighting sufficient so as not to cause eyestrain. Using colored bulbs or lampshades creates mood-lighting, and candles (used in conjunction with electrical lighting) can be atmospheric as well. If your game makes use of diceless rules or a lot of live-action, experiment with more erotic lighting, but always keep safety in mind.

• **Props:** As mentioned before, props enhance a game by giving players tangible things to see and handle as their characters might. Take great care with any props that are potentially dangerous (especially weapons). Players can acquire props for their characters, which they can keep in their treasure boxes.

• **Space:** Take the time to make sure the setting for the game is comfortable and large enough for everyone. Some troupes sit around a table, while others like to be spread out by sitting on the floor or on furniture. In either case, make sure that there is plenty of room for everyone to sit comfortably, that there is space for books, character sheets and places to roll dice as needed. If you are meeting in a public or a semi-public space, see that your game won't disturb anyone. Be respectful of other people's property.

• **Food:** Like gaming, eating is a social activity, and gamers love to combine the two. Have everyone chip-in to buy some suitable munchables and drinks for the entire game. If you or some of players cook, whip up something beforehand. Try to stick to "finger foods," for they are easy to serve and eat while in the midst of telling a dramatic story. Food that is too messy or complicated can detract from the game.

Conversely, you can use food as part of the game with prior planning. Perhaps characters are invited to a feast and you want to make a live roleplay out of the event, so serve a real dinner and have players play their characters during the meal!

Blue-Booking

Blue-booking is a game technique first introduced by Aaron Allston in his *Strike Force* supplement for **Champions**. It appeared in various forms before Allston's publication, but he is the game-author who gave blue-booking its name. During game-play, it is common for players and Storytellers to exchange "paranoia notes" that contain secret information known only to that player and the Storyteller. Blue-booking takes the concept of note-passing further by creating a means for players to stage secret "off-camera" scenes, conversations and game-play with other player- and Storyteller characters.

Each player has a notebook or journal (Allston's original players used blue college exam books, where the name of the technique comes from). Instead of passing notes, the player writes material down in her blue-book and passes it to the Storyteller or another player for a response. Whole conversations take place in this fashion, which only the participants are privy to.

Blue-booking provides a number of benefits, including privacy, durability and portability. Players who are uncomfortable playing out certain dramatic or romantic scenes in a game may not feel so constrained in writing it down. And all the material in the blue-book remains private between the player and the other characters involved, which allows a development of players' own subplots that remain secret until they choose to reveal them. Blue-booking gives a written record of character interactions and offers the everyone a way to recall certain conversations and plot threads. Once a blue-book fills up, the player starts another and stores the old blue-book away for reference.

Conversely, blue-booking is time-consuming and *very* addictive for some players. Limit the amount done during

game-play, or the story screeches to a halt while you deal with one player's blue-book. Allot time at the beginning or end of a game session for it. If there are many subplots and similar material to deal with, set up an entire game session for blue-booking, but only if all players agree. If necessary, take a blue-booking break in the middle of the story —if it doesn't leave players dangling.

Blue-booking effectively combines with the idea of a character journal or an online game. In fact, an online game resembles nothing more than an extended, long-range blue-booking session.

Solo- and Pair-Games

Although most troupes consist of anywhere from four to eight players, a larger group of players is not available or even desirable. A Storyteller and only one or two players can create an exciting story on their own. Smaller groups permit individual attention to each character; characters are in turn more important because there are fewer places on which to focus the spotlight.

Larger groups can also take advantage of solo- and pair-games to provide additional depth. In addition to "offstage" events in blue-books, Storytellers can run solo games for players to give their characters some independent experience away from the rest of the group — then bring it into the main storyline. Such solo games are perfect for solitary events like quests, personal subplots and the like. It is also an opportunity to bring something to the rest of the troupe without having to be just a "mouthpiece" for the Storyteller.

Pairs or small groups can even get together on their own to play out certain scenes between their characters. This chance is ideal for characters who wish to embark on an affair of the heart without boring all the other players with the details, or who want to introduce a new player into the group by pairing him with an experienced player for a prelude or short background story. Such independent roleplays and asides give depth to characters and their relationships.

Electronic Glamour: Online Games

Along with the traditional face-to-face method of roleplaying ,the rapid growth of the Internet is another outlet for troupes: online gaming. Electronic games can be a useful supplement and resource for an existing chronicle or the basis for an online game.

Players can use e-mail to keep in touch with the Storyteller and each other; e-mail is a sort of "electronic blue-book" with which to pass notes to the Storyteller between games and to run solo-games. An ambitious Storyteller can create a webpage for the chronicle that has information players can access for their characters: background on the chronicle, news, rumors,

and so forth. The webpage can also contain announcements of changes in the game schedule, advertisements for new players and even links to other **Changeling** and Storyteller resources on the Internet.

Online games take two forms: play by e-mail (PBEM) games and live "chat" games. Both have advantages and disadvantages, along with some unique differences.

Play by e-mail games resemble extended blue-book sessions via e-mail. PBEMs focus more on storytelling and interaction than on combat; it is easier to handle the broader activities of the story than to micro-manage a combat scene over e-mail. Storytellers running a PBEM may find a simplified or fast-resolution combat system and "lite" rules useful for handling game events (as described elsewhere in this guide). The advantages of PBEM are similar to blue-books: time to think about responses, greater freedom to roleplay and plan dialogue, permanent records of the story (barring hard-drive crashes), and a more story-oriented setup. However, PBEM games move slowly and are a lot of work. They also lack the kind of energy that live interaction provides.

Chat games fall somewhere between PBEM and live games. They take place online in chat rooms or on IRC (Internet relay chat) in real-time. The players type in their actions and dialogue and the Storyteller types in what happens. Some chat rooms (like those on America Online, for example) even provide electronic dice-rolls, although few of them handle the dice mechanics of the Storyteller system. Chats provide some real-time interaction but are still very slow compared to face-to-face gaming. They can also become quite chaotic if everyone tries typing and sending information at once. The Storyteller needs to set some kind of protocol. Chats can also be difficult to do for long periods; it's tough to get a group of players together who are scattered across the country (or worse, around the globe) in a chat room once a wee. And few want to type for hours at a time, especially if they work at a keyboard during the day.

Yet, with voice- and video-conferencing capabilities increasing every day, to say nothing of the potential of virtual reality, the Internet will remain a growing resource for gamers.

Rules and Regs

"I shot you! Did not! Did too!"

— a commonly heard argument over Cops and Robbers

The Storyteller system considers the rules as less important than the progress of the story. If a rule isn't working or isn't fun, then the needs of the story must take precedence. Never let the rules restrict your imagination. The rules of **Changeling** are meant to be a ladder for your imagination to climb on, not a cage to hold it in.

Rules are not your enemies, so long as you know how to handle them. Their purpose is to help provide a common "vocabulary" for you and players to clearly describe events in the story and to decide what the results are.

If you are new to **Changeling** (or even if you are a long-time Storyteller), read through the rules and consider care-fully which ones you like or don't like. Note rules you think are going to be a problem, and discuss them with players in advance. If they agree, consider changing the rules to better suit your troupe's vision of how the game should work. As long as you tell them changes to the rules in advance, there should be no problem.

Over time, every troupe develops a set of house rules — rule changes and interpretations unique to the way the troupe plays the game. Some write them down and make them available to everyone in the troupe, others have unspoken agreements among all the members about how to handle a particular rule. House rules make the game system more "user friendly" and better able to support the kind of stories they want to tell. They smooth out the rough edges of the rules system that might hinder the troupe's story.

Naturally, not all house rules apply equally to all groups. What works for one troupe might not work for another, but there's nothing wrong with that. Groups still have the common language of the Storyteller system to fall back on, and they learn more about each other's unique "dialects" as they go. When a new player joins a group, she might have played with another troupe with different house rules. In this case, make your troupe's house rules as clear as possible to avoid any misunderstanding. Be firm in applying them to everyone. If the new player has a problem with your rules, explain why the troupe sets things up as they are. Also listen to her feedback. You never know, you might discover that the newbie's rule works better!

Combat

A situation in which the rules come into play the most is combat — mainly because most roleplaying games treat combat as something of a game in and of itself, with extensive rules and systems for every aspect of a fight. How you want to treat combat is up to you and the troupe. The Storyteller system supports simple combat systems and the much more detailed, complex systems like those presented in **World of Darkness: Combat**.

Roleplaying games are descended from tactical war-game simulations. The sole purpose of a war-game is to simulate combat, so the only important aspects of either side are their combat abilities. The additional story elements of roleplaying games are add-ons that appeared later, stressing more and more of the storytelling aspect. Still, roleplaying games carry a strong strain of their war-game heritage, with emphasis on combat and combat rules.

The rules presented in **Changeling: The Dreaming** represent a middle-ground between the storytelling nature of the game and the war-game heritage of roleplaying games in general. Combat is reasonably detailed without bogging down too much in the specifics. The systems presented in Chapter Three of this book provide a looser, and general combat system, with emphasis on the story rather than on rules mechanics. The combat systems from **World of Darkness: Combat** are better suited to handling very intricate, tactical combat almost as a game unto itself.

Handle combat in different ways at different times, although this takes some finesse and a fair amount of trust on the part of your players. For a scene where the combat isn't all that important, use the general rules from this book to keep the story moving. For a combat where every detail is important, like a complex duel, use more advanced combat rules to handle the small details with greater precision. Whatever you do, tell players in advance what they can expect from the combat system and don't arbitrarily change the rules on them.

• **Chimerical Combat:** Changelings also have the unique options of chimerical combat and physical combat. Chimerical combat has less lasting effect since it affects only the fae mien of the characters involved. To mortal observers, chimerical combat may be a childish game out on a playground. Physical combat, on the other hand, can have very serious consequences, including death. You may wish to use different standards to judge chimerical combat than you would physical combat. Chimerical battles should be sweeping and heroic, full of stunts and daring. Physical combat can be much more brutal and realistic, unless a changeling Calls Upon the Wyrd to bring the chimerical into the physical world. Emphasize the differences between chimerical and physical combat. If you make chimerical the former swashbuckling and fun versus

the harsh nature of physical combat, players will likely choose chimerical combat first, which is in-character for the Kithain. You support the genre in this way.

Glamour and Banality

Both Glamour and Banality are complex forces that are difficult to sum up in a single set of rules. In dealing with them in your game, don't be bound by the rules; use them as tools to create interesting descriptions to give players the feel of the wonder and wild power of Glamour and the cold, gray weight of Banality. Trying to make up a rule for every possible situation is simply too banal for **Changeling**, and it takes all the Glamour out of the game if everything is reduced to numbers and dice rolls. See Chapter Three for more information on handling Glamour and other game aspects in a more dramatic way.

Permutations

So, you've gotten players together and run some stories with them. The players give you feedback on their characters, develop their own subplots and side-stories in their bluebooks, and throw you plenty of suggestions on what they want

to see next. You're handling all the plots with no problem and weaving in the various details of the characters' lives to make it all come to life. Sounds like you have a full-fledged chronicle on your hands. Now you're ready for the *really* tricky stuff: the underlying assumptions of the genre, how to juggle multiple plots, leading characters through some important changes and events and maybe even bringing a little art and meaning into it all....

Character Development

Once players get a feel for their characters and play them, issues arise: Where will those characters go with their fictional lives, and what directions will the players take them in? Most good characters develop over time, but some may need a little help from you to keep moving in the right direction. As the Storyteller, you greatly influence how characters develop. Make sure the trip is an engaging and challenging one.

Romancing the Character

Character development really starts when a player obtains a real bond with his character; when he starts to care about what happens to a character and the other characters in the fictional world. Then a character is more than just numbers and Traits, but a real personality with goals, plans, and needs.

How does a player come to care about a character in this way? It takes time. Just as it takes time to form relationships with real people, it takes time to form a relationship with a character. Affection and understanding for characters come with things such as shared experience, overcoming adversity, and getting to know a character's personality, history, and goals.

When looking at a player's new character, do *you*, the Storyteller, like the character? She doesn't have to be a character you would play yourself, but she does have to be one that at least interests you. If a character doesn't interest you, you're not going to want to run stories and subplots for that character, and that's not fair to the player, who expects and deserves equal treatment like the other players. If a character really doesn't interest you, tell the player right away so you can work something out, rather than ignoring the character and hurting the player's feelings. This situation weakens the chronicle.

Once a character is in play, help the player develop a bond with her character. The two main things you can do as Storyteller to help spark players' interests in their characters are: Give a character an interesting history and personality, and furnish challenges for her to overcome.

Give her a history even before she enters the chronicle. Work with the player to get some of the character's background story worked out before play begins. Use the prelude to define vague areas about her and to give the player a handle on what the character is like (see Getting Them Together for more information).

Once a character is in your chronicle, include a history and give the player opportunities to explore the character's personality and reactions to different situations. Remember,

the story is about the player characters, so their traits must be important to the story in some way.

Achievements also create player interest in a character. If a character gets to do amazing, fun things, especially against difficult odds, the player is soon to be interested. Did Sean's character manage to slay a chimerical dragon in an epic battle? That's a character worth playing! When players start talking about the accomplishments of their characters like they're talking about real people, you're getting somewhere. Playing the character creates additional history for him during the game itself. If you challenge characters and give them opportunities to do great things, the players will reward you with their attention and interest — and better roleplaying.

Experience

All Storytellers should set their own standards for giving out experience since the needs of the story vary from chronicle to chronicle and from troupe to troupe. It is better to hand out less experience than to give out too much; it is easier to give out more experience if you are wrong than to take back points you have already given. Err on the side of caution.

One to three points of experience per game session is a good guideline, with a slight bonus for extraordinary roleplaying. Rarely give out more than four points per game, unless you want character advancement to be *very* fast. Try to be fair in handing out experience; it shouldn't be used as a measure of "winning" by players. Their real reward is in having a great story and lots of fun, not collecting imaginary points.

If some players are unable to play as often as others, or new players join a chronicle with very experienced characters, adjust the experience awards for them. Players who don't show up can get a smaller percentage of Experience Points for their activities "offstage," perhaps making it up with entries or stories in their blue-books. New players should get a bonus in experience or freebie points to help put them in the same league with the others, or start a new character at the base level, but provide them with higher experience awards to allow them to advance more quickly, until they've "caught up" to the others.

In addition to handing out experience, work with players on where they spend their points. Encourage them to come up with explanations of *how* their characters gained new dots in Abilities and Traits. Perhaps the justification comes out of your story, such as a character who won a riddle contest in your last story now spends experience to add a dot in Enigmas. Otherwise, you can work with players to come up with short stories or subplots where they gain the training or lore they need. Seeking out a teacher or bit of lost lore can even be the basis of a whole story.

One way to control the spending of experience and to provide justification for it is to assign increases to specific Abilities or Traits based on the character's achievements during the game. In the case of the riddle-contest character, for example, offer a small experience award but give a character an extra dot in Enigmas for his success during the story. This concession lets characters grow in a logical manner and encourages players to *use* the Traits and Abilities they want to improve. It works especially well with Backgrounds by giving a character new or increased Backgrounds like Retinue, dreamers, or Mentors for their activities in the chronicle.

Glamour

Glamour is an important part of a fae character — it is at the very heart of what the fae are about — and a character's views on Glamour, along with ways of using it and gaining it, are crucial to character development.

Work with each player to find out how his character views Glamour, both philosophically and as a literal force in the world. One changeling might sense Glamour (through Kenning) as glowing, multicolored light while another senses it as more of a tingling sensation on the skin, while a third sees it as a glimmering fountain, water from the well of poetic inspiration. Glamour is all of those things and more. It is a force beyond a single description or view, and it should be treated as such.

Some changelings consider Glamour to be a precious resource — to be hoarded and used sparingly to delay the coming of Winter just one more day. Other Kithain believe Glamour exists to be used and that one must spend some to get more. Many Kithain use very little Glamour for cantrips, saving it "for a rainy day," while others are spendthrifts; Glamour runs through their hands as quickly as they get it. Fae use Glamour for many things, including enchanting mortals and creating chimera, but some use it for cantrips or they have their Glamour tied up in maintaining various enchantments.

A character's methods of epiphany are also very important to a character's personality and development. Is the character devoted to working as a muse for one or more mortal dreamers to create more Glamour, or does she prefer the path of self-inspiration and Rapture? Perhaps a character is drawn to the quick-fix of Ravaging or the dark path of Rhapsody. What are a character's Musing and Ravaging Thresholds? These convey a great deal about a character, so give them some thought as to how you can work them into stories. See Chapter Three for other ideas for playing epiphanies.

Bedlam and Banality

The other side of the Glamour coin is the twin hazards of Bedlam and Banality: two threats to every changeling. Overcoming the challenges posed by Bedlam and Banality in addition to the difficulties of the story can be quite revealing about a character.

First off, is a character more prone to Bedlam (an excess of Glamour and wild fae magic) or Banality (the absence of Glamour and creative expression)? Which does a character fear more? Does she take any particular steps to avoid either?

For Bedlam, the Storyteller can work with stories involving madness and separation from mundane reality. Changelings who immerse themselves too deeply in the Dreaming may never be able to return to anything that mundane humans would deem sanity, thus removing them from the game. The Storyteller can use the warning signs of Bedlam (**Changeling**

, page 209) as examples of how to work Bedlam into stories as some characters become more threatened by it. Then it's up to players how to react. Does a player whose character is teetering on the brink of the third threshold of Bedlam take steps to shock his character back to normal? Do his friends realize the danger and try to help him? What form does a character's madness take? Different characters show different warning signs of the approach of Bedlam, which not only makes each character unique, but also makes diagnosing the onset of Bedlam more difficult.

For most players, Banality is the greater threat. The cold touch of it strips away the power of Glamour. There are many different game systems describing how a changeling acquires Banality, but ultimately, the description and handling of it are up to the Storyteller. It is a useful storytelling tool that enforces the genre of the game. If a player is acting too banal or mundane in playing a Kithain, offer them a warning about the dangers of Banality. If players insist on becoming caught up in mundane details too often, warn them, followed by a point of temporary Banality to remind them not to forget their characters' fae sides.

Encourage players to help each other when threatened by Bedlam and Banality. Working together against these threats brings a group closer and provides interesting dramatic conflict.

Consequences

"All men die, but not all men truly live."

— William Wallace, *Braveheart*

Avoid simply killing a player's character out of hand. No one likes to see a character they have invested time and energy on wiped out by a bad dice roll. On the other hand, don't coddle players or make things too easy for them. If they feel their characters will suffer no repercussions from their actions, then the actions they take have little or no meaning. Make players care about what happens to their characters and present them with the possibility of dire circumstances if they do not succeed in the pursuit of goals. *And follow through with them if they fail.* If you do not present consequences along with rewards, things are too easy and victories are hollow.

The penalty for every failure need not be death. Different things can befall a Kithain in the pursuit of a goal. Perhaps it is a minor setback or truly serious, such as a character suffering chimerical death, or being branded as an oathbreaker and exiled from court. Whatever it is, it creates new drama and storylines for the chronicle as a character struggles to overcome. Stories are usually more engaging when the heroes fail once in a while, and we come to care about them more because they overcome their setbacks.

Although it is rare, death comes to the Kithain. Worse than death is the threat of being Undone by Banality, the fae spirit within is suppressed until the mortal self dies and the fae spirit can be reborn. Both fates are final in the context of the chronicle if handled well. The death of a player character should always be a significant event. A character might die because the player plans to leave the game or to play another character and wants this one to go out in a blaze of glory. Or a player might sacrifice his character for a truly noble cause

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suited to the character's goals. **Changeling** characters should be driven by passion, and those passions sometimes call for a character to make the ultimate sacrifice. A character may also die simply because the player made some serious mistake other than a major botch on a dice roll. In any case, the death of a character is a tragedy and should be treated as such.

When dealing with a story where a player *wants* a character to die, avoid making the story contrived or robbing players of their right to make choices. If a player wants her character to go out with a bang, give her the opportunity to make that final leap for the character, but don't push her off the ledge. Don't *force* the scene onto players, especially if they manage through cleverness or skill to avoid it.

Long-Term Goals

Character-building provides characters with long-term goals to pursue. What each character's goals are is up to you and the players, so talk with each one and find out his long-term goals and ambitions. Discover if they are things you are interesting in including in the chronicle and how they will interact or conflict with the other characters' goals.

There are two kinds of long-term goals: attainable and unattainable. Attainable goals are those that a character might be able to achieve after a quest or a series of stories in which the pursuit of the goal is built up. Some examples include:

• **Completing a Quest:** This could be any sort of quest or search a character is on, from fulfilling a geas to delivering an important message to finding a character's long-lost father.

The end of the quest may be a mystery to the player, or he may have worked out the details with the Storyteller in advance.

• **Gaining Fame and Fortune:** The character may seek to win his fortune and establish himself in Kithain society. How a character goes about it and what obstacles stand in his way form the basis for good stories.

• **Slaying an Enemy:** The character has an enemy to overcome — a changeling devoted to hunting and killing a chimerical beast, or a Kithain or mortal enemy a character is pledged to overcome. What drive stories are the threat the enemy poses and what lengths a character is willing to go to defeat it.

• **Winning True Love:** A common goal for Kithain, in which fantastic quests and deeds are undertaken in order to win the heart of another. The character is devoted to this person and would do anything to win his affections. Such romances are often forbidden or they suffer obstacles the character must overcome.

Unattainable goals by their very nature tend to bring the chronicle to an end, such as dying gloriously in battle or returning to Arcadia. Achieving an unattainable goal means dramatic changes for the chronicle. Such goals are often better suited to a finite chronicle, in which the character achieves them, otherwise the player must understand that her character may never attain the desired goal — which is frustrating. Some unattainable goals include:

• **Returning to Arcadia:** Many Kithain seek to find some means to return to the lost realm of Arcadia. A quest

to find the way back to Arcadia can easily make up an entire epic chronicle, with changelings traveling the world to seek lost lore and treasures that could point the way, learning life lessons as they go. The questors may discover Arcadia is not the haven they hoped it would be, or that their mortal lives have changed them to be no longer suited to life in Eternal Summer. Or perhaps the troupe could start a new chronicle that begins when their characters are banished from Arcadia for some reason they cannot recall, and thus return to find the world they knew is long gone.

• **Síocháin:** Some changelings, rather than seeking lost Arcadia, search to balance their fae and mortal natures and achieve the inner peace said to create the legendary Síocháin. The Síocháin are truly immortal, like the fae of old, and have great power and wisdom at their command. They are also mysterious, as few know anything at all about them. Some even doubt their existence. A character or group of characters hoping to become Síocháin are in a for a long journey of self-discovery as they work to integrate and balance their two warring halves.

Crossovers

Changeling players and Storytellers may want to use some material from other White Wolf World of Darkness games in their chronicle. These games are **Vampire: The Masquerade**, **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, **Mage: The Ascension**, and **Wraith: The Oblivion**. Each game details the other supernatural inhabitants of the World of Darkness from their own unique point of view.

Crossovers add depth and interest to a chronicle but present some unique challenges, including handling different rules for various supernaturals in the context of a **Changeling** chronicle and preventing these supernaturals from overrunning the chronicle — resulting in the Kithain being bit-players in their own stories.

The first case may require some creative storytelling or judgment calls. Each of the supernaturals in the World of Darkness have their own Abilities and Traits: Humanity and Disciplines for vampires; Rage, Gifts and Rites for werewolves; Spheres and Arete for mages; and Arcanoi and Pathos for wraiths. How these various Abilities and Traits interact with Glamour, Banality, and cantrips is largely up to you, although guidelines appear in books like **Book of Lost Dreams**.

The other issue with crossovers is not allowing the other supernaturals to dominate the game. The Kithain are in many ways the weakest of the supernaturals in the World of Darkness in matters of sheer power and combat ability (although an angry troll calling on the Dragon's Ire is nothing to laugh at). A single capable mage or werewolf can be a formidable ally or adversary for a group of Kithain characters, so remember that the story is about the changeling characters, not the guest supernatural of the week. Don't let the powers of a mage or the struggle of the Apocalypse or the Jyhad to overshadow the ongoing story of the player characters. One good way to do this feat is to keep events in a crossover story on the Kithain's home ground: the Dreaming and the chimerical world, where

the player characters understand the ground rules and their supernatural "guests" may not.

The best use of other supernaturals is as *mysterious* elements. Players forget that the various supernatural factions of the World of Darkness know very little about each other, and their characters have not read all of the rulebooks. Without the appropriate Lore knowledge, player characters should hear only rumors and legends about the other supernaturals and may have never (knowingly) met one. It may be hard for players to hold in their out-of-character knowledge of the other supernaturals, but try to preserve the mystery of their existence within the chronicle.

Breaking the Circle

Even the best chronicles run out of steam. There are ways to extend a chronicle's life, but there comes a time when the story is over and the curtain should fall.

Keeping It Fresh

Keeping a chronicle interesting and fun week after week is a lot of work, but well worth it because of great stories made and of fun times with friends. Over time, players become comfortable with their characters and accustomed to the status quo of the chronicle. Find ways to shake up that status quo to keep things from getting stale and routine (the bane of all changelings and **Changeling** chronicles). Some of the things you can do to keep things interesting include:

• **Change in Player Characters:** Changes in the player characters introduce changes in the chronicle. Remember, the player characters are the focus, so as they change, the story changes with them. Perhaps characters are recognized by a noble and made special emissaries or agents of the noble's court, which provides them with new duties, responsibilities and enemies to deal with. Maybe a character finally wins his lady-love and settles down to a different sort of life than his wilder youth, or maybe characters grow up out of childhood and become and grow from wilders to experienced grumps, leaving their wild adventures behind for a life of court intrigue and teaching a new generation. Some of these changes can alter a chronicle over the course of years.

• **Change in Storyteller Characters:** Like the player characters, supporting characters change over time. These changes usually impact the lives of the player characters in some way, although they are not the focus; how the player characters handle the changes created by the supporting characters is, though. For example, perhaps the local noble is killed or deposed. How will the player characters react to the shift in power? Do they support the commoner rebellion behind the assassination? Do they have an interest in finding out who is responsible or in staying out of it? What if they are set up as patsies by the real assassins?

• **Total Chronicle Shift:** In this case, you have reached a dead-end in the current chronicle and want to radically change it in order to continue the story. In effect, you are ending the first chronicle and beginning another using the

same characters. Perhaps players' long quest to return to Arcadia succeeds, for example, and their characters vanish from the mundane world entirely. Then they begin the next story exiled from Arcadia again for reasons no character can recall, and they find themselves in the mundane world a generation or more from when they left. Are there even any Kithain left in the world? Are all of the characters' friends and allies long since lost to Winter? And, most importantly, can Kithain get cyberware and ride in spaceships? The chronicle is suddenly off in an all-new direction.

Happy Endings

"And they lived happily ever after."

— Traditional fairy tale ending

It is better to allow a beloved chronicle to come to a conclusion than to let it fester. Make the last stories and memories of the chronicle fun and happy ones rather than slowly winding down and suffering a lingering death.

• **Epilogues, Sequels, Prequels and Reunions:** Just because a chronicle is over doesn't mean you have to stop playing in it! You can always revisit the chronicle later, in short stories that take the forms of epilogues, sequels, prequels, and reunions. Epilogues are part of the conclusion — little stories that wrap up loose plot threads from the story. These may be played out in blue-books, via e-mail or in live games. Sequels are continuations of the chronicle. A sequel might be a short story that deals with the further adventures of the chronicle's characters, or it might be an all-new chronicle that builds on the events of the previous one. Prequels take place before the start of the chronicle and can focus on the events of characters' young selves (imagine playing a long-time grump character back when he was a wilder or even a childling) or on earlier times, including previous *incarnations* of characters in a historical setting. A reunion gets the original characters of the chronicle back together. Perhaps some plotline or common connection from their past has come back to haunt characters years later.

Look at the popular fictional franchises (*Star Wars* or *Star Trek* films and books) for numerous examples of all of these different types of stories.

In ending the chronicle, try to bring things full circle, wrap up plot threads, and resolve important character stories and goals in some way. This is like the conclusion to an epic novel; it should have drama, a climax and a sense of resolution. A good ending provides a sense of closure for everyone involved, although it can still leave some hook for the beginning of a new chronicle. Don't end the world to end the story, just offer a good place to stop and let characters "live happily ever after."
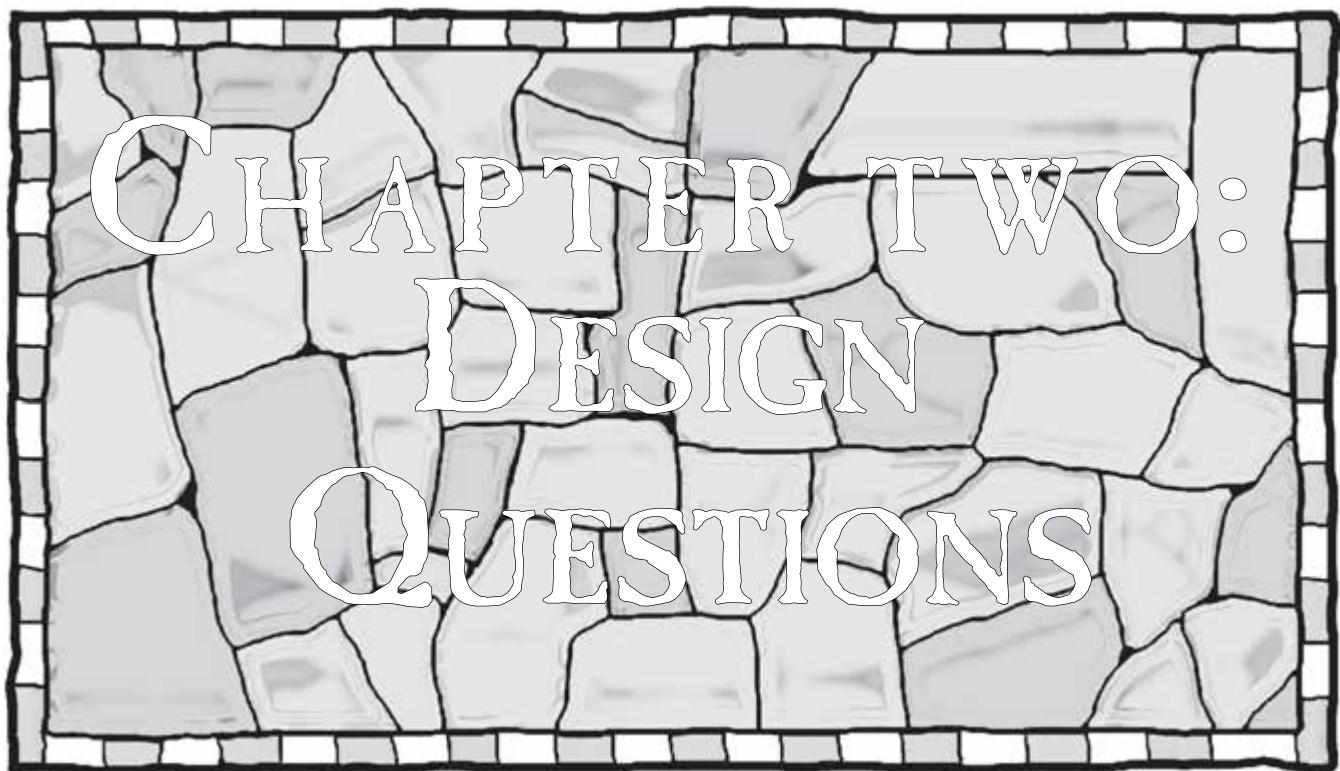
CHAPTER TWO: DESIGN QUESTIONS

As she lies there
So safe in her dreamland
I stop and I wonder
Where we'll end up in time
Then I turn around and drift away
Maybe I'll tell her some fine day.
—Lowen & Navarro, "The Best of Me"

Welcome to the Storytellers Corner. Herein I will attempt to answer a few of those questions that have been plaguing **Changeling** Storytellers and players alike. The questions answered here are not limited to rules…no, questions concerning the world of Changeling are addressed as well. Where is Arcadia? What does a changeling see when he looks at another changeling? Can a werewolf see through the Mists? All these questions and more are answered in the pages that follow.

This chapter is presented as a FAQ. Each section begins with a commonly asked question which I then answer to the best of my ability. I'm sure that there are a great many other questions that I have missed here, but the intent is to cover some of those more commonly asked. In the end you should always remember the Golden Rule…if you can't find an answer for it in the rulebook (or you don't like the answer that is there) make it up! Its your game…your story. We just provide some guidelines to help you tell your stories.
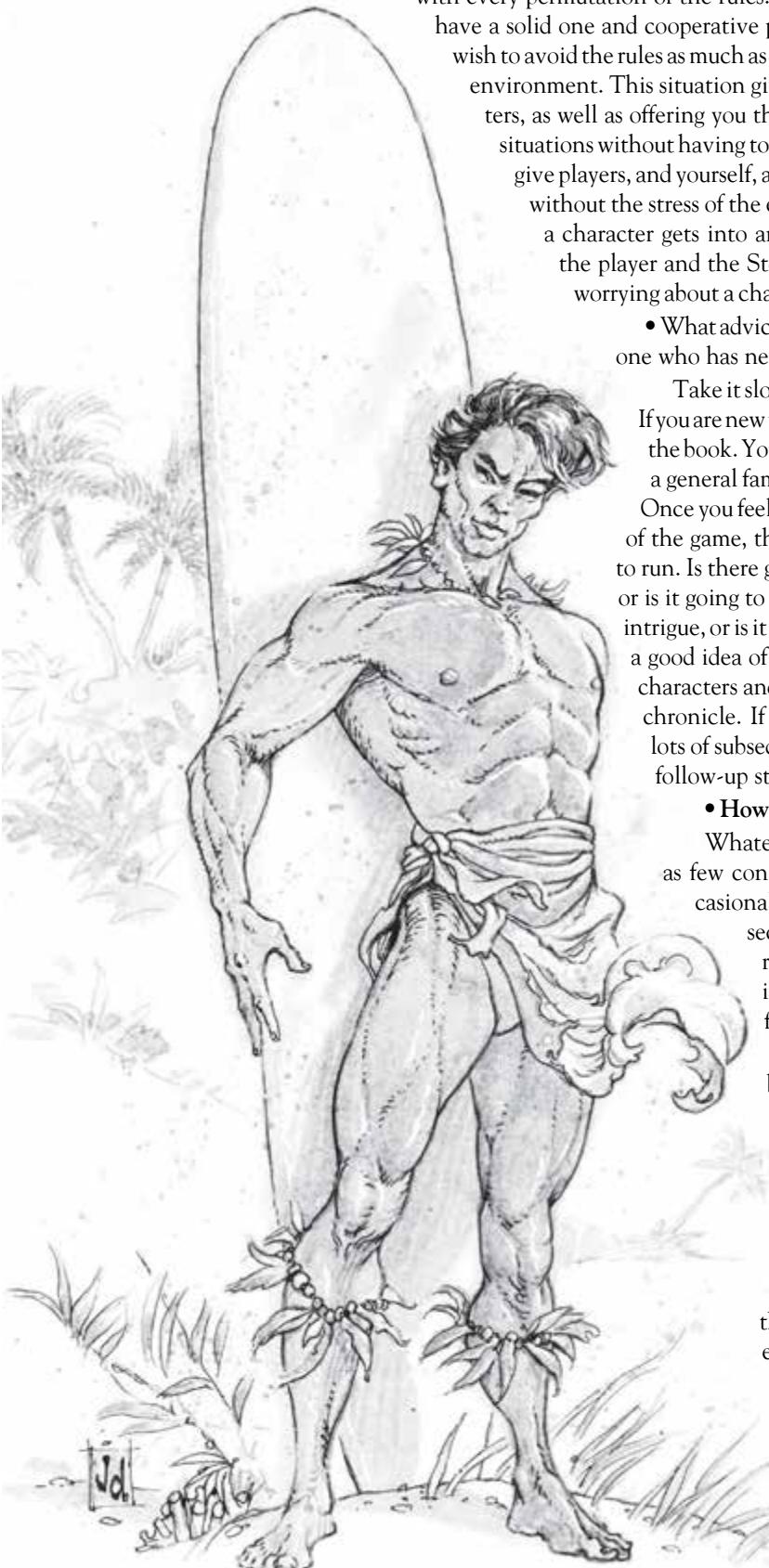
• **Changeling is a big game with a lot of rules — where does a new Storyteller begin?**

One step at a time. To tell a successful **Changeling** story, you needn't be familiar with every permutation of the rules. **Changeling** is about telling a good story. If you have a solid one and cooperative players, you should be just fine. At first you may wish to avoid the rules as much as possible. Set your first story in a heavy roleplaying environment. This situation gives players a chance to get to know their characters, as well as offering you the opportunity to see how they react to different situations without having to worry about the rules. This environment can also give players, and yourself, a chance to try out certain applications of the rules without the stress of the entire scene hinging on one certain rule. Perhaps a character gets into an honor duel with a Storyteller character. Both the player and the Storyteller can try out the combat system without worrying about a character dying because of some misinterpreted rule.

• What advice can you offer a **Changeling** Storyteller, especially one who has never run an RPG before?

Take it slow. As stated before, the story is what is important. If you are new to roleplaying, then definitely take the time to read the book. You don't have to memorize every rule and chart, but a general familiarity with the rules and the setting are a must. Once you feel you have a good understanding of the framework of the game, think about the nature of the chronicle you want to run. Is there going to be a definite beginning, middle and end, or is it going to be indefinite? Does it center around politics and intrigue, or is it going to be more action-oriented? Once you have a good idea of the type of chronicle, you will need to consider characters and the first story, which often sets the pace for the chronicle. If it is action-packed, players are going to expect lots of subsequent action, and they will be disappointed if the follow-up stories are more oriented toward intrigue.

• **How do I handle contradictions between sourcebooks?**

Whatever works best for you. Honestly. We try to have as few contradictions as possible, but they do crop up occasionally. This case may be true between some first and second edition rulebooks. In the end, if you find a rule that contradicts itself in different books, talk it over with players and decide what works best for your chronicle.

But, if you are talking about contradictions between different Storyteller lines, that is another ball of wax. Each of the different creatures in the World of Darkness has its own point of view — its own paradigm. And each of the Storyteller games is designed from the perspective of the creature that it is about…changelings see things from a changeling point of view, mages see things from a mage one, and so on…. It is for this reason that cross-over chronicles can be so difficult. In the end, it is for the Storyteller to decide which view is correct, if indeed any one truly is.

Even different groups within the same game can have different perspectives, causing sourcebooks for the game to have apparent contradictions. For example, the Shadow Court might have a very different view of what happened during the Accordance War

(as do commoners and nobles), causing varying information in their sourcebook than has been presented elsewhere. This variance does not mean that their view is necessarily right or wrong, only that it is different.

System Queries

• **Can a vampire, mage or werecreature become a changeling, or vice versa?**

A changeling can *never*, under any circumstances, become a werewolf or a mage! Nor can a mage or werewolf become a changeling. A changeling can, however, become a vampire — assuming he lives through the Embrace. Even though faerie souls are strong enough to survive generations of reincarnation, the Embrace can often snuff out a changeling's existence. A changeling killed in this manner is typically removed from the normal cycle of reincarnation and passed on to the world of the dead.

Any time a changeling is Embraced, the player must make a Glamour roll (difficulty equal to the vampire's Banality + 2). Only one success is needed to survive the transformation; if no successes are gained, the character's faerie soul is destroyed and the character dies.

Assuming he survives, any Kithain unlucky enough to be Embraced is immediately claimed by the Mists. He reverts entirely to his mortal seeming and forever loses all access to (as well as memory of) his Arts and Birthrights. The faerie soul within the new Kindred is in permanent stasis and must wait until the Kindred suffers Final Death before reincarnating. Some changeling students believe that a faerie soul who suffers such a trauma never returns to this world.

A Kithain-turned-vampire who is enchanted regains his memories of his fae life for the duration of the enchantment. Although as soon as the enchantment wears off, the Mists quickly claim these memories again. An Embraced changeling who is enchanted does not regain access to any of his former abilities (Arts, Birthrights, etc.); he simply remembers what he used to be, and what he has lost in exchange for physical immortality.

• **What about one of the kinain?**

Technically, there is nothing to prevent a kinain from becoming a werewolf, mage or a vampire. In the case of becoming Embraced, it is suggested that a kinain lose all access to her faerie abilities (as with changelings, mentioned before). As to Awakening as a mage, or changing into a werewolf, this matter is left up to the Storyteller. Personally, I would recommend against it, unless it is specifically a part of the story that the Storyteller has in mind. Such characters, if not carefully managed, could unbalance a chronicle.

• **Can a changeling become a ghoul or be Kinfolk?**

Yes and no, in that order. A changeling can become a ghoul, but for as long as Kindred blood remains in his system, he cannot learn new Arts, Realms or increase his Glamour. However, permanent Glamour can be lost while in this state, but it cannot be restored.
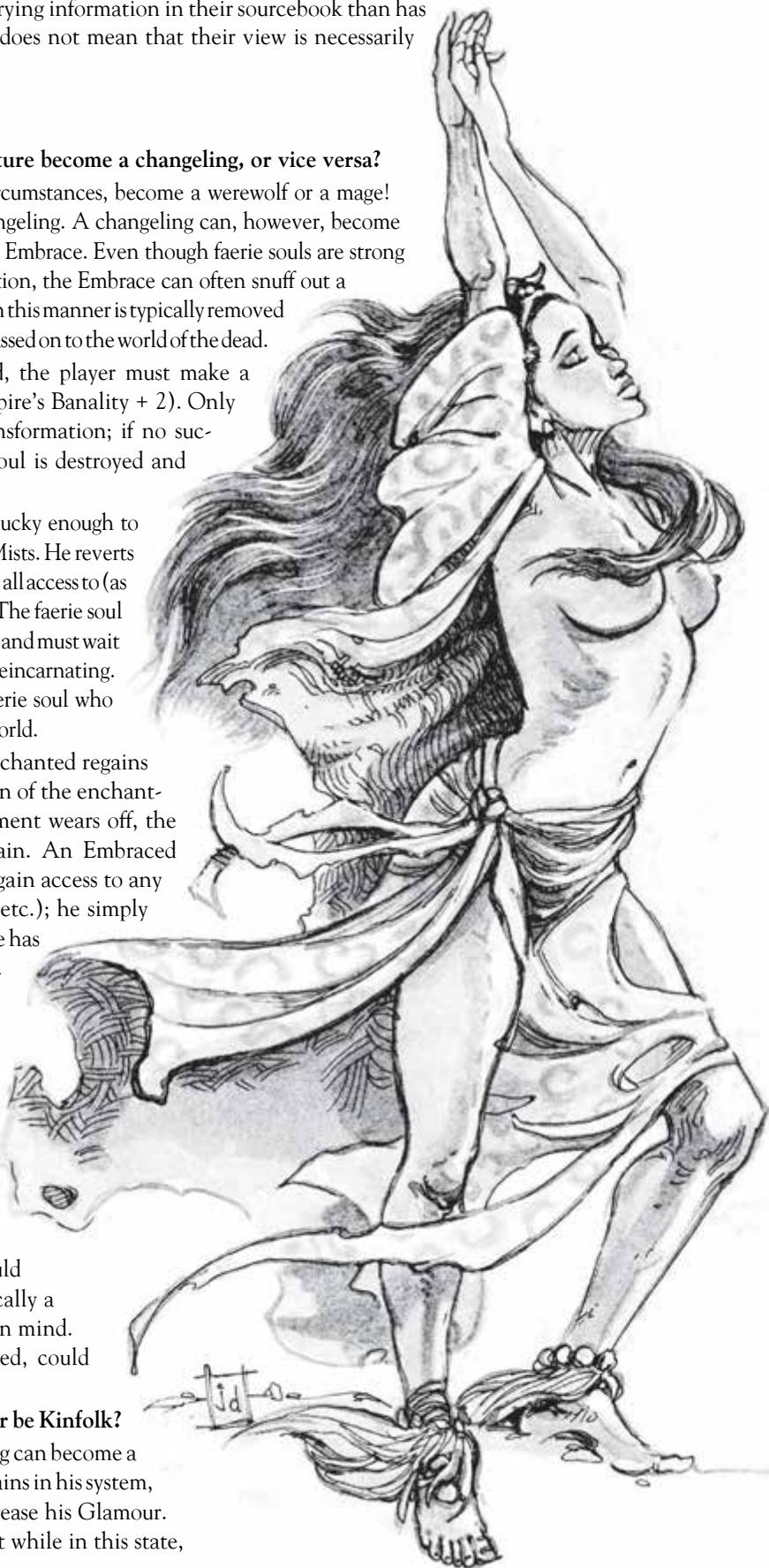
- **What about one of the kinain?**

A kinain can be either a ghoul or Kinfolk. A kinain who is ghouled suffers from the same side effects as a changeling.

- **What happens when a changeling dies? Can a changeling become a wraith?**

Under normal circumstances, a commoner who dies of old age or who is killed reincarnates into a newly born human. The length of time that this reincarnation takes varies — some fae are reborn almost immediately, while others may take years or even decades. Why this time variance exists is unknown. All changelings who remained on Earth after the Shattering are reincarnated in this manner — including sidhe of House Scathach and small numbers of other sidhe who stayed behind as well.

A changeling who is killed off by cold iron or during the Embrace is gone for good. Souls who suffer these fates never reincarnate. However, those who are killed like this sometimes become the Restless Dead — wraiths. Not all changelings who are killed this way become wraiths, however; many are lost forever into the void of Oblivion.

It is unknown what happens to sidhe who die and will probably never be answered (so stop asking). There are several theories, though. The popular version (at least among the sidhe themselves) is that they return to Arcadia; although, there is no way to confirm this speculation since all contact with Arcadia has been lost. Others believe that the sidhe soul is forever lost when they die, and some commoners claim that they are the reincarnated souls of sidhe killed during the Accordance War. If this claim is true, it would seem that the sidhe do return, only in the form of commoners.

- **What happens when a vampire drinks changeling blood?**

There is no concrete answer to this question since each vampire has a different reaction. Fae blood acts as a hallucinogen to any Kindred drinking it. Storytellers are encouraged to make up their own effects, such as power surges, hair sprouting from embarrassing places or over-sized ears. As a general rule, as soon as the vampire ingests the blood, the player must make a Courage roll (difficulty 3 + the number of Blood Points ingested). If no successes are earned, the vampire enters the second threshold of Bedlam (see **Changeling: The Dreaming** Second Edition, pg. 208). A botch causes the vampire to enter the equivalent of third-stage Bedlam as well as gaining a permanent Derangement (Storyteller's choice).

- **How are changelings affected by aggravated damage?**

According to the Storyteller rules, aggravated damage cannot be soaked. There is nothing on this subject in **Changeling** because most players ignore this rule anyway. The exact effects of it are left up to the Storyteller, but the rules for healing aggravated damage are described in the **Changeling** rulebook, page 247.

• **Are changelings immune to the Delirium that most shapeshifters invoke?**

Yes. This immunity doesn't mean that most changelings would be terrified of a 9-foot-tall rampaging werewolf, but he will remember the experience afterward.

• **Are the new kith and Arts published before the release of the second edition?**

Official revisions for many of the secondary kith and Arts published before the second edition are not yet available, though most of them can be easily adapted for second edition. For the kith, determining which Birthrights are wyrd and which are chimerical is usually a matter of common sense. Most Arts are easily adaptable as well ,though the Storyteller and the player may want to go over any Art in question to make sure it conforms to second edition rules and if not, make any changes necessary.

The Seeming vs. the Fae Mien

• **What does a changeling see when he looks at another changeling, mortal or freehold?**

The Dreaming taints everything a changeling sees. The colors are brighter and even the mundane might appear fantastic. Freeholds almost always seem spectacular in some way; this effect is chimerical reality and is discussed at length on pp. 34-35 of the **Changeling** rulebook.

A changeling who sees another changeling always sees that changeling's fae mien, though she still recognizes the mortal seeming. This chimerical vision is not turned on or off, but both are always on at the same time. In a sense, a changeling gets two views of the world around her: the mundane and the magical. It is not surprising that other supernaturals consider changelings to be somewhat flighty and distracted with all of this sensory overload.

• **How does the fae mien interact with the real world?**

This question is a common one. Can a troll fit into a VW Bug? Where can I hide my chimerical sword? The answer is yes and anywhere you want to… if you're willing to suffer the consequences. For example: The fae mien of a troll may be eight feet in height, while the same character's mortal seeming is only six. If this character walks through a normal doorway, he has to stoop, at least to have
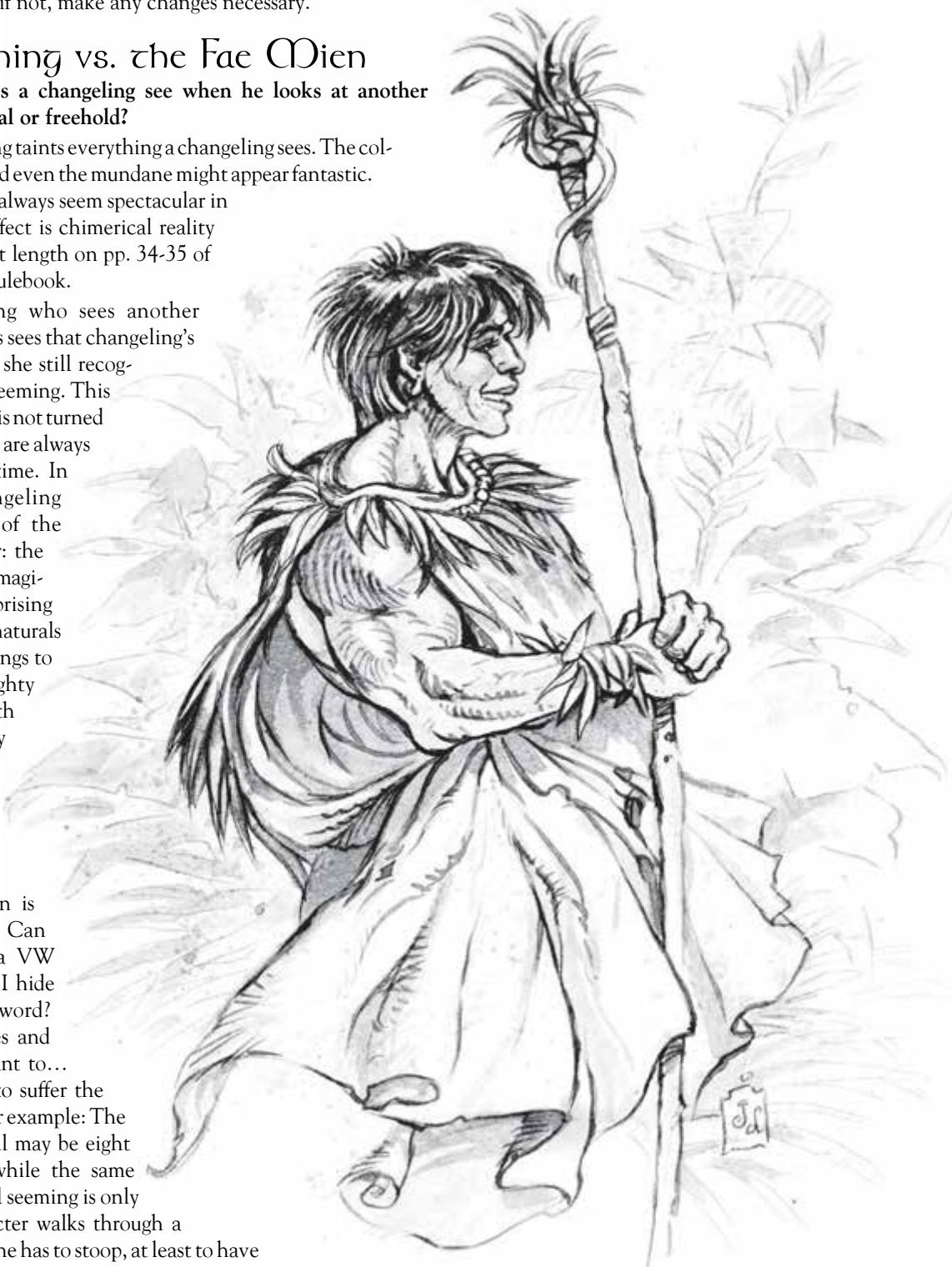
Seeming vs. Mien

The concept of how a changeling appears to himself and to others (mortals and supernaturals) is perhaps one of the most complex in **Changeling**. The concept of the mortal seeming and the fae mien are discussed at length in the core rulebook, but it seemed that some further explanation could not hurt. The following section goes into further detail regarding the differences between the seeming and the mien and how it all works.

Changelings live in two worlds: the banal and the Glamourous. To the mundane world, they appear as typical, albeit eccentric, people. Behind this facade, they lead lives guided by magic and mystery. Kithain have to accept both magic and mundanity as components of their lives. In fact, Banality and Glamour are both integral parts of their being, and their appearances reflect this. Changelings have two appearances: an outward, obvious mortal form and a second, hidden faerie form.

The Mortal Seeming

A changeling's mortal seeming shows everything that is mundane about him. It allows him to interact with the so-called "normal" world without attracting too much attention. A fae's mortal guise reflects her true nature. For instance, a troll hero may masquerade as a tall, stoic man tinged by sadness. A well-esteemed boggan might appear to everyday people as a short, plump woman with a cheerful disposition. Even a redcap with flaming red hair, facial tattoos and an intricate pattern of screws affixed in her forehead might prefer to appear as a acne-scarred hellraiser with dishwater blonde hair and a few piercings. By walking about in mortal guise, the fae find it easier to interact with mortal society and hide from the tides of Banality.

The Fae Mien

Most people with changeling blood don't realize they carry such until the day that they awaken to their faerie heritage. The mortal seeming is developed first; the fae is blissfully unaware of her true self during this time. When the faerie spirit awakens, the changeling undergoes a process known as the Chrysalis. Newly awakened changelings are suddenly aware of the magic around them and soon understand the dangers of mundanity. The world instantly becomes a much larger place. Behind the reality lies the Dreaming.

After the Chrysalis, changelings can sense the hidden world of the fae. A playground might actually be a court of young faeries. A sewer tunnel can lead to an underground kingdom. A homeless man in an alleyway might be a wandering knight resting from his quest. It's all a matter of perception, of seeing the imaginary hidden behind the real.

In the same manner, the essence of a changeling hides behind his mortal seeming. Faeries walk in the midst of human society, but they hide their true selves. Fae can sense — or ken — the faerie appearances hidden behind mortal disguises.

This hidden appearance is known as the fae mien. By kenning the souls of other fae, a changeling can spot her brethren.

Dropping the Mask

As with real life, the boundary between the fantastic and the realistic is an important one. Separating the mortal seeming from the fae mien is one of the more unusual parts of playing a character in this game. For players who want more detail, here's a few rules to help you distinguish them.

Changelings hide their true identity from most mortals, but not from each other. Kenning another fae has a few unusual complications. If a changeling's Glamour is higher than her Banality, her fae mien is pretty obvious to other fae. No roll is necessary to see a changeling's faerie mien.

If the changeling's Glamour drops below her Banality rating, other changelings see her appearance slowly fade behind her mortal seeming. Older fae refer to this as the *retrorse*. Once it occurs, it's harder to see the fae mien behind the mortal facade. More specifically, a player must roll Perception + Kenning (difficulty 6) for the changeling to see the fae mien, though the fact that the person is a changeling is still readily apparent. There is no shapeshifting involved; it's all a matter of perception.

A Matter of Perception

Who can see a changeling? And if they can be seen, *what* is seen?

Mortals

Under all normal circumstances, the fae mien is invisible to mortals. Mortals always see a changeling's mortal seeming unless they are enchanted or the changeling has called upon the Wyrd.

Other Changelings

As long as the changeling's permanent Glamour is higher than her permanent Banality, other changelings see her fae mien without difficulty. If her permanent Banality is higher, it will take a Perception + Kenning roll (difficulty 6) for other changelings to see her fae mien. The fact that she is a changeling is not missed by other changelings.

If she has temporarily forgotten her fae nature (say from having been killed by chimerical damage), another changeling must make a Perception + Kenning roll (difficulty 8) to even sense that she is a changeling. The difficulty for this increases to 10 to determine her kith.

Other Supernaturals

Many supernatural beings have different means by which they can sense changelings or even see their fae miens (many of these methods are described in Chapter Four). However, unless a supernatural (vampire, wraith, werewolf or mage) is employing one of these methods, the supernatural always sees a changeling's mortal seeming (unless the supernatural is enchanted or the changeling calls upon the Wyrd, of course).

his fae mien clear the door. If he doesn't stoop, he still passes through the door, but he gains a point of temporary Banality. Why does he gain this Banality? Because he is denying his fae mien — he is denying chimerical reality. He gains Banality any time a changeling lets the real world take precedence over the chimerical.

• Does real damage affect the fae mien?

Yes. Any weapon, real or chimerical, affects it. Conversely, only real weapons affect the mortal seeming. Chimerical weapons (unless given reality by Calling Upon the Wyrd) have no apparent real-world effect.

• Does chimerical damage affect a character's mortal body?

In most cases, no. Though a changeling who has had his arm blown off by chimerical damage "believes" that he doesn't have an arm. Of course, if a changeling Calls Upon the Wyrd, then all chimerical effects become real.

• Can a changeling who is in his fae mien use a handgun?

Yes, however, using modern weapons and devices can be considered banal, and the Storyteller may wish to give that character a point of temporary Banality from time to time. Ultimately, it depends on the type of chronicle you are running. Additionally, the character's kith might determine whether or not the character should gain Banality from using a modern item. For example, a nocker has no problems with modern contrivances, while a sidhe might gain Banality for every use.

Glamour and Banality

• What exactly is Banality, and how does a character gain it?

Banality is disbelief in the magical. It is an unwillingness to accept anything beyond the mundane. There are many different theories among the Kithain as to the exact nature of Banality, and no two schools of thought are the same. What all changelings do believe, however, is that Banality eats away at the Dreaming. For changelings, it is anathema, for it tears at their very essence, destroying everything that they strive to be.

Characters who regularly deny their faerie existence or who harm the Dreaming in any way risk gaining Banality. Any time a character brings suffering, or even if he fails to encourage creativity, he could gain Banality.

• How can you get rid of Banality?

First, there are no hard and fast rules on this subject. How a character can rid herself of Banality, if indeed she can at all, is a question that can be answered only by the Storyteller. It should be an extremely difficult task — nigh impossible. Almost all changelings are Undone by Banality before they face a mortal death.
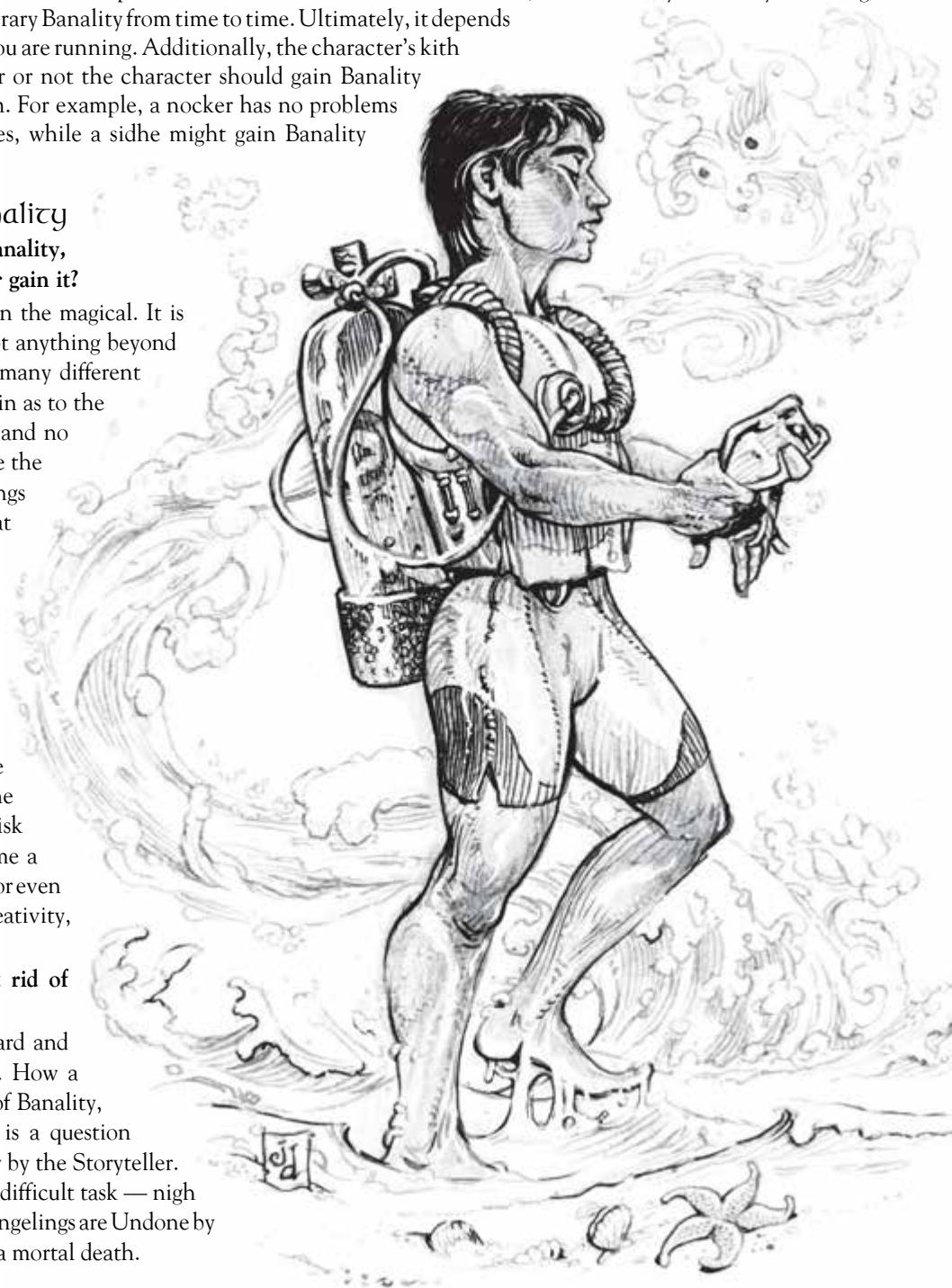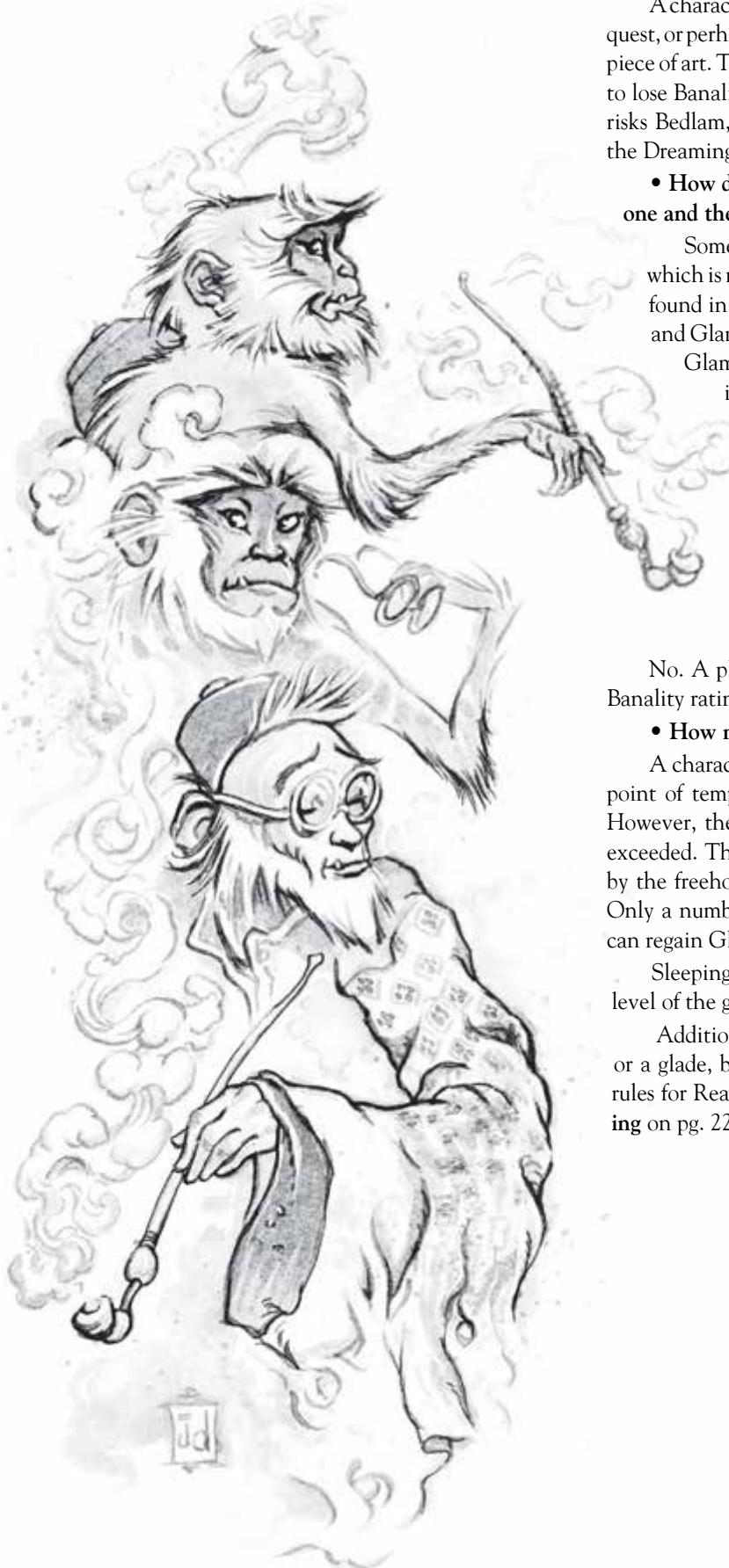
A character could lose Banality by succeeding in a fantastic quest, or perhaps even in the creation or musing of a spectacular piece of art. Time spent in the Dreaming may cause a character to lose Banality, though any character who attempts this feat risks Bedlam, not to mention becoming permanently lost to the Dreaming.

• **How does Glamour relate to Quintessence? Are they one and the same?**

Sometimes they are and sometimes they aren't — which is really the best answer one can give. A dreamstone found in a glade would most likely be both Quintessence and Glamour, though a work of art, while it may generate Glamour, is unlikely to be Quintessence. The decision is left to the Storyteller.

• **What happens to a changeling who reaches 10 permanent Banality?**

The character is Undone. He becomes completely mortal and can never become fae ever again. The faerie soul still lingers until the mortal dies, however, at which point it is reborn into a new human body.

• **Can a place have Banality?**

No. A place can be banal, but it cannot have an actual Banality rating.

• **How much Glamour can you get from a freehold?**

A character sleeping in the light of a Balefire regains one point of temporary Glamour for each level of the freehold. However, the character's permanent Glamour can never be exceeded. The character must have been granted permission by the freehold's owner to gain Glamour in such a manner. Only a number of characters up to the level of the freehold can regain Glamour this way.

Sleeping in a glade restores one point of Glamour for each level of the glade, but only for one character.

Additional Glamour can be Reaved from either a freehold or a glade, but it risks damaging the freehold or glade. The rules for Reaving can be found in **Changeling: The Dreaming** on pg. 226.

The Dreaming

• **Where is the Dreaming? Is it a part of the Umbra or its own separate realm?**

The Dreaming is not exactly a part of the Umbra, though it is connected to it. The Dreaming exists in around and through the Umbra, touching it everywhere, but connecting to it only in certain places. It is possible to find your way into the Dreaming from the Umbra, but it is not always as easy as it seems. Like the fae, the Dreaming is elusive and can be quite difficult to locate unless you have been there before or know exactly what you are looking for. **Dreams and Nightmares** offers a great deal more information on how the Dreaming relates to the Umbra, and it is highly recommended to players who intend to use the Dreaming heavily in their chronicles.

• **Can my changeling character return to Arcadia?**

The answer to this question is generally no. Yet, some Storytellers may want to make it the goal of their chronicles to have characters return to the faerie homeland. However, I recommend that once characters return to Arcadia, they not be allowed to return to Earth.

• **Can I bring a vampire, werewolf or mage into the Dreaming?**

If a character is first enchanted, a changeling can bring anyone through a trod and into the Dreaming. Werewolves and mages may even be able to find their own way into the Dreaming, through the Umbra, if they know what they are looking for.

• **Where is Arcadia?**

Most changelings believe that Arcadia is in the center of the Deep Dreaming, but the exact location of Arcadia, if it even exists anymore, is for the Storyteller to decide.

CHAPTER THREE: PLAYING THE RULES
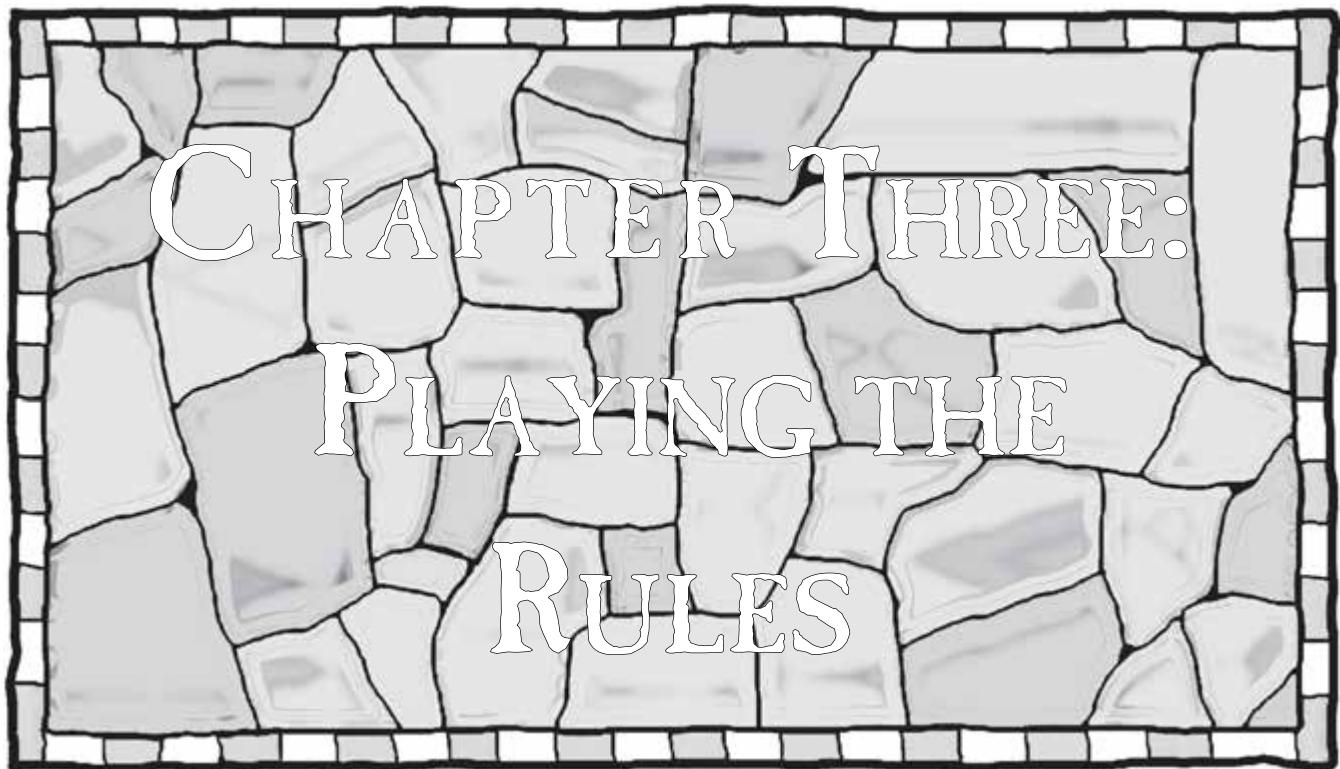
"Wait a minute! How much damage does a chandelier do? It doesn't matter!
It's a Story Entertainment!"
— Chris Kubasik, "The Interactive Toolkit," White Wolf *Inphobia* #54

Changeling is a storytelling game and, like all games, it has rules. Unlike games concerned solely with winning and losing, the Storyteller system is a roleplaying game, devoted to creating and telling stories. This definition means players and the Storyteller need to handle the rules differently than they would for a board game or a card game. This chapter describes how to use the rules of **Changeling** to enhance the stories your chronicle creates, rather than limit them. It also looks at different perspectives of interpreting the results of actions, with fewer rules and less use of random elements (like dice-rolling), which can sometimes interfere with dramatic storytelling.

Dramatic Game-Play

There is a long-standing debate about rules among devotees of roleplaying games. One side feels rules are useful only so far as they provide a backdrop for roleplaying, storytelling and the unfolding drama of the game. The other side feels the rules are important in and of themselves. Not only does the rules system affect how the game is played, but it also affects the overall feel of it. Lengthy debates on ideas like realism vs. playability, or roleplaying vs. roll-playing, spring up on a regular basis. It is unlikely that this book, or any other game book, will end the debate over the importance of rules in roleplaying. Here we discuss how to use the rules to *improve* your game.

Roleplaying has rules primarily to help cut down on arguments about exactly what happens during the story as it unfolds. The rules provide a common language and a universal system for determining the results of any given action that a character takes. The system tries to prevent the kind of arguments kids get into over games of Cops and Robbers, where you claim you got someone and they claim you didn't. Who's right? The rules help you both figure it out. As Storyteller, you have a Dice Pool for any given task and a target number. A roll of the dice tells you how well you did at the task in question.

Game rules are intended to *simulate* things from real life, such as jumping a fence or firing a gun, along with fictional events like casting a cantrip or wrestling with a chimerical monster. The rules are a model for how those things work so you can determine what happens after a character decides to draw his sword and fight in a formal duel.

The real secret of the rules is: *You don't really need them.* They are just a model, a means of figuring how often and how well a character succeeds at any given task. If you took away these rules, you could still figure out how things would happen if a troll decided to bop an upstart pooka on the head with his club; it would just be more difficult and take some more guesswork on your part. How strong and fast is the troll? How alert is the pooka? You could look at their Traits and figure out what *you* think would happen. In fact, all game rules still require interpretation from players and the Storyteller to make sense of them — some rules just need more than others.

Systems

"Rule Number One: Don't sweat the small stuff. Rule Number Two: It's all small stuff."

— Richard Carlson, Ph.D., *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*

Now that you have an idea of how to take the rules and play around with them to suit your story, this section looks at some specific examples and systems for using fewer dice-rolls, employing the rules in a more dramatic way, and other game mechanics that can hinder your story.

Perception

"Okay, you walk into a dark room. Make a Perception + Alertness roll." Statements like this one tell players something is up right away. One of the difficulties of perception in a roleplaying game is that the Storyteller serves as all of the senses of the player characters. Thus you describe everything their characters experience in the story. The primary way that the rules model this fact is through the use of Traits like Perception and Alertness. The player rolls to see if a character notices or understands something.

However, being asked to roll tells the player there is something to be noticed or understood about a certain person, place or thing — even if they fail the roll. If the player succeeded, he also knows roughly by how much from the number of successes rolled, which can lead players to spend Willpower points to make sure they don't miss an important Perception roll or to expend extra effort to search for clues because they "know" there is something to be found. Furthermore, it also gives way to a proliferation of Perception rolls as players try to check every nook and cranny for secret doors, hidden clues and ambushes.

It is beneficial to make Perception rolls for the player characters in secret, then tell them what they notice about something. Then the player doesn't know if the roll succeeded or even that a roll was made. You simply describe the scene to the player and she has to react to what she knows. The player can ask for additional detail or use cantrips or other abilities to try to learn more, but nothing can be inferred from the dice roll itself. In this case, Perception works much like real life and the players cannot completely trust their senses since they don't know anything more than their basic level of ability. A character who is more Perceptive than another can count on his perceptions being more accurate, but that's all.

Now, you can dispense with much of the dice-rolling. Use the Trait levels of characters as a guideline for what they notice about something, along with the dramatic needs of the story. You can arrange some dramatic scenes with greater ease when

you know they won't be spoiled by a player's lucky or poor dice roll. Don't use this advantage against the players to constantly trip them up with ambushes, traps or cases of mistaken identity; rather, you can be sure at least one character notices the carefully laid ambush at the last second or that he gets a funny feeling when someone isn't telling the whole truth. Use the perceptions of characters to help guide your story and pass information on to players, especially those who are playing characters with specialized Knowledges and Abilities.

The Parrot Syndrome

There is difficulty in playing a character who has skills or, more importantly, knowledges that you don't. Actors do it fairly easy because their lines are written out for them. Even if an actor playing a doctor hasn't the slightest clue of the difference between an artery and a vein, he sounds like an expert because the show's writers took the time to research their information and have a medical consultant on hand.

Yet, the very nature of roleplaying games prevents them from being scripted in advance without ruining the spontaneity and fun of building the story. The type and amount of information available to a character is determined by the number of dots a character has in certain Traits, particularly Skills and Knowledges. The player might not know anything about vampires, but as long as her character has Lore, Vampires ●●●●, she has a very good chance of finding out. The player rolls and the Storyteller determines from the result how much a character should know about the subject at hand.

The primary problem is the Parrot Syndrome. The player makes her roll, the Storyteller tells her what her characters knows about the subject, then the player turns to the other players and "parrots back" what the Storyteller just told *her*. The player doesn't have much of an opportunity to put her own spin on the information, nor does she really have the option to withhold information nor add her own opinions and ideas to it. The other players have already heard it and, although they might be able to separate what they heard from what their characters were told, any surprise associated with the information is gone. Part of the fun of playing a character who is smarter, more perceptive or more knowledgeable than you is the ability to tell other people what you have noticed. The Parrot Syndrome makes it difficult.

There are some ways around it. Use notes or blue-books to pass information on to only a character who has the appropriate Trait, thus allowing the player to decide what to do with the information. The character might keep some or all of the information to himself, lie about it, distort it in some way, add to it or simply pass it on to the other characters in whatever way he desires. The important factor is that it is the *player's* choice what to do with the information, and the other players don't necessarily know what is going on. They do know *something* is up since they can see the note-passing or blue-book exchange, so occasionally pass out notes that are blank or contain little messages irrelevant to the game. This harmless "switcharoo" keeps the other players from knowing for certain if the note contained information of import.

Note-passing and blue-books are very time consuming, however, and can slow down play while you write one out, particularly an in-depth description. Cut down on time-wasting by preparing a few notes in advance with things you think characters will notice during the game. There is no way to predict which character will notice what and to what degree, so having notes in advance can be hard and still takes time.

Another, more radical option for avoiding the Parrot Syndrome is to give a little control of a character's perception to the player, which allows her to describe some things that her character knows and notices during the story. This option requires a great deal of trust on your part, as you must be confident that a player can handle influencing the story.

For example, three player characters discover the body of a boggan murdered in his humble shop. The characters want to search the shop for clues about the killer. You've decided the boggan was killed by his Unseelie brother following an argument, but players don't know that. Tell them what they notice about the body and the condition of the shop, then ask players what their characters find. The characters with the highest Perception and Alertness Traits get the greatest leeway in making up what their characters discover, while ones with the lowest appropriate Traits may not notice much of anything. An eshu character has very high Perception and he paces around the body in a Sherlock Holmes-esque fashion.

"You see here?" he says to the other characters. "These marks on his throat clearly show he was strangled, most likely by someone a good deal larger and stronger than him. The killer must have great strength, although I do not think we can rule out a mortal." You didn't give the player any information; the eshu's player just made it up. Rather than trying to push the player back onto the track you had in mind, you jot down some notes and decide the Unseelie brother might have a troll or mortal accomplice working with him. The characters continue their investigation and eventually track down the accomplice, proving the eshu correct, even though it was never originally in the plot to begin with.

This method lets players change the story a great deal. Even with players you know and trust, using it requires guidelines to keep your story from turning into chaos.

The player's ability to speculate about what her character notices or knows is based primarily on a character's level in the necessary Trait. As the Storyteller, you always have the right to say, "I don't think your character could know something like that," if you think the player has gone too far. In the case of multiple players offering speculation on the same topic, a character with the highest Dice Pool for the task is most likely to be correct. But, this is not *always* the case! Sometimes the speculation of a player with a lower Dice Pool might be the right one, either because it fits the story better or simply surprises players and keeps them from getting complacent.

If you want to limit the ability of the players to alter the story this way, tell a character to spend a Willpower point to offer such a speculation. Keep in mind, however, that there is no guarantee any player's speculation is right, no matter how high their Traits are, but a character with high Traits should be

right more often than he is not — else this technique doesn't work and the Traits are meaningless.

Kenning

Kithain have senses beyond those of mere mortals, along with information on secrets of the Dreaming and memories from past lives and experiences. Yet, the Storyteller has no real-world model for the use of faerie abilities like Kenning. This lack of a model is helpful because it provides more latitude for creative expression; you can make up more of what a changeling perceives through Kenning than you can about how a computer or a car works.

More than ordinary perception, requests by the Storyteller for a Kenning roll tip players that something special is happening — something detectable only to their characters' fae senses. It is wise to make Kenning rolls in secret or to decide what to tell players based on how many dots their characters have in Kenning and Perception. The characters with the highest Dice Pools notice the subtler, more detailed things, while Kithain with lesser abilities just pick up on the obvious. This distinction allows the mystical aspects of the chimerical world to be more abstruse and surprising (as they should be).

The perception of the Dreaming is more subjective than Kithain perceptions of the real world. If you choose to employ the method of allowing players to make up some of what their characters notice or know, you can give them more flexibility to come up with things from the Dreaming — where perception often *is* reality. If a Kithain character claims to see evidence of a Questing Beast in the chimerical landscape, then perhaps there is one around there somewhere….

Social Interaction

"I didn't play D&D for all those years without learning a few things about courage!"

— UFO geek, *X-Files*

"Okay, the video clerk seems suspicious," you say to players. "Why do you want to know who this card belongs to? Isn't it yours?"

"I Persuade him," a player says with a clatter of dice. "I've got four successes."

That is an example of an all-too-typical "social exchange" between a Storyteller character and a player character. Players tend to treat social interaction as just another obstacle to overcome with a dice roll. This treatment removes a crucial element of the storytelling experience — the opportunity to reveal something about characters through dialogue and interaction. You wouldn't want to read a novel or see a movie in which characters never spoke or interacted with anyone except to pound them into paste. Even the most violent movies and books contain *some* dialogue. Reducing the social interaction of the player characters to the level of a few dice rolls reduces the storyline to little more than a bad video game.

Encourage players to play out their interaction with a Storyteller character, or another player character, before rolling any dice. They should practice this method to determine

the effects of their attempt to persuade, charm or intimidate the other character, which gives the player the opportunity to show something about his character's personality. And, it gives you the chance to develop relationships between the supporting cast and the player characters.

Again, you may want to secretly make some interaction rolls to prevent players from knowing right away whether or not their attempts were successful. You might also want to dispense with some interaction rolls and base the results on the character's abilities. If it's fairly certain a character can charm a video-store clerk and the players make a good show of it, why leave the decision up to the dice when you can come to your own conclusion and keep the story moving?

Interactions Between Player Characters

One exception to the usual interaction rules should come about when player characters relate with each other. With the exception of Glamour-based abilities (like the Awe inspired by a sidhe), interaction rolls should not be used between player characters. Let players play out the interaction and leave their characters' reactions up to them. Players don't like to have their free will taken from them. Additionally, players given the ability to use Persuasion and Intimidation against their fellow players may abuse this privilege. Provide roleplaying cues; describe a Storyteller character as "compelling" or "impressive"

without dictating to them how their characters should react. The reactions of the players are, after all, a fundamental part of the story's flow.

Romance

In the passionate world of the Kithain, romance is an important form of character interaction — and difficult to play out in a roleplaying game. The courtly love and romantic interludes of characters must not be reduced to a collection of dice rolls. Handling this topic requires great care and forethought.

First, talk with players and find out how comfortable they are with romantic scenes. If they are fine with the idea, discuss the boundaries of good taste for the game and how to handle certain issues. Will sex be discussed and, if so, in what terms? Keep sexual innuendo and discussion vague and "offstage," as it is in most TV shows and PG-13 films. A simple "you and your beloved spend a passionate night together" is usually sufficient without getting into the details. A more mature troupe may wish to consider some more adult themes in their games, but **Changeling** is not *Penthouse Forum*, despite the presence of randy satyrs and other fae.

Some players and Storytellers have no problems talking about sex but are uncomfortable playing out these romance scenes. This can be difficult if one is playing a character who declares his undying love to another, when the other player is

the same sex as he. Players may play characters of a different sex, as Storytellers are called on to play opposite-sex characters all the time. Understandably, some gamers find the situation awkward and uncomfortable. The best solution may be to play out romantic scenes in a written format, like a blue-book or through e-mail; both options allow all parties to feel less inhibited since the interaction happens "offstage" and is more private.

When handling the romantic interests of characters in play, take their various Traits (like Charisma and Appearance) into consideration, but do not reduce the pursuit of love (or even lust) to mere dice-rolling. Challenge the players to come up with suitable roleplaying to achieve their romantic goals, as you would for any other social goal. Some of the more personal particulars can be glossed over, but a character's pursuit of a beloved makes for a grand story in the courtly romantic style that is so suited to **Changeling**.

Performance

Glamour is a creative force, and changelings are infused with it. Kithain are artistic and expressive creatures, whether hosting a fete or working to achieve Rapture through their creative pursuits (see Epiphanies, page **57**). Performance is a social experience to be shared with others, so changeling tradition and legend are filled with bards and other performers who gather Glamour and influence others through their performances.

In handling a performance during the game, have the player make a Performance + Charisma (or other appropriate Attribute) roll, which is useful in cases where the performance outcome is in doubt; there is no need to play out the performance itself.

In most instances, however, the performance results can be determined without a dice roll. How skilled is the character in Performance? How high is the governing Attribute? Use these questions as guidelines to expeditiously determine the general outcome of a performance. If a character simply wants to play a song or recite a poem to entertain the court during a social gathering, there is no real necessity to roll the dice; just tell the player how well the performance went based on a character's ability and on the player's roleplaying. As with all social interactions, good roleplaying on the player's part enhances the effects of the performance. If the player composes a song or a poem, then she should get a fair bonus, and players should be encouraged to express themselves through their characters.

Persuasion

What if a character wants to be convincing or charming? Again, you can call for a Persuasion + Charisma or Manipulation roll to determine the results, or base the result on the general level of ability the character has, coupled with the roleplaying the player puts into it. Not all of us are master orators, so always take into account the ability level of the *character* when a player makes an attempt at Persuasion or another social interaction. A somewhat weak effort delivered by a very charismatic character who is adept at interaction is more effective than the same dialogue delivered by a character who has the personality of a stone — and a sharp, rough stone at that. Don't expect Oscar-winning performances, but award sincere effort.

If players enjoy playing out a social interaction, then let them and merit their efforts. If players don't like to play out these interactions, draw them out and give them a chance to enjoy it; however, don't force them. You can still use shorthand methods, dice-rolls or guesswork based on their Traits, to resolve what the result is.

Epiphanies

Epiphanies are a changeling's strongest connection to the pure source of the Dreaming. They represent the heights and depths that the Kithain are capable of in their pursuit of Glamour, and they offer many dramatic possibilities for a chronicle. The dice systems for epiphanies in **Changeling: The Dreaming** (pages 212-216) describe the processes in shorthand, thus reducing a fairly complex process to a few dice rolls for the sake of simplicity. This section expands on the paths to epiphany and how they can be played out in the context of the game.

This material is an optional expansion of epiphanies; it is not necessary to play out every one in the same detail as given here. Sometimes it benefits the story more to use the dice method for epiphanies. It quickly resolves the outcome of any given attempt at gathering Glamour, allowing the story to continue. Use the demands of the story and your best judgment to decide which system to use at any given time.

These systems are looser than the dice methods, thus permitting greater flexibility but requiring more of a judgment call from the Storyteller. Like Bedlam, there are no concrete or fast rules here — just guidelines on what a changeling must do to achieve the epiphany. It is, of course, up to the Storyteller to decide if the changeling's efforts succeed and, if so, how well.

Reverie

Reverie is the most common and innocuous of the four paths to epiphany. It has three basic steps and relies heavily on social interaction between the Kithain and a mortal dreamer. The information in the Social Interaction section on page 54 is useful for handling some of the steps of the Reverie process, which is as follows:

• **Discover what inspires the dreamer.** First the Kithain must get to know the dreamer and find out what inspires his creativity, opening the dreamer to dip into the well of Glamour and bring some of it into manifestation. If the dreamer is a long-time friend or associate of the character (usually because of a dreamer Background or a long-established relationship in the chronicle), then the Kithain probably already knows what inspires him. This situation does not mean that circumstances cannot change, however; what inspired a dreamer last week might not hold that special spark of Glamour for him any longer, requiring the changeling to seek a new source of inspiration. Dreamers are not machines, and what inspires a person varies greatly because of his situation, background and mood.

To get to know the dreamer, the player must roleplay how a character meets him and gains his confidence, trust and friendship. This process results in a common interest in the dreamer's creative field. A changeling might meet a dreamer with the potential to be a great poet and strike up a conversation with her about different poetic styles and influences. Consult the previous section on social interactions for ideas on how to handle this initial interaction without relying too strongly on dice rolls.

Once a character has gained the dreamer's trust, there is an opportunity to discover what might be used to inspire the dreamer to greatness. This opportunity relies partially on social interaction — getting to know the dreamer's likes and dislikes — and on fae intuition and Kenning, which is a feel for the flow of Glamour and how to encourage its growth. Take into account the material on Perception and Kenning on pages 52-54 for how a character can obtain hints about what inspires a dreamer. It is possible that a changeling tries several methods of inspiration before hitting the right one. Just finding the right clues can take anywhere from an evening chat to spending months on end with the dreamer, coaxing forth subtle hints.

• **Inspire the dreamer.** Once the changeling has an idea on how to inspire the dreamer, an attempt can be made. The method a character used for inspiration should keep the changeling's Musing Threshold in mind. A Kithain who primarily generates Glamour by inspiring love may not have as much success instigating a sense of calm, but she may be a catalyst for a great work of art, especially a love sonnet! Inspiring the dreamer relies on the Traits of Manipulation (guiding the dreamer along the right path) and Empathy (having a feel for what works and what doesn't). The amount of time the changeling spends trying to inspire the dreamer is also important; the more time taken to plant the proverbial seeds of inspiration, the larger the eventual harvest of Glamour.

Once the dreamer has been inspired, the inspiration must follow its course before any Glamour is generated. It is the act of creation that brings forth Glamour, not the act of inspiration. The Kithain must stay in touch with the dreamer throughout the creation process, which requires additional roleplaying, and he may have to offer further aid or encouragement to help the dreamer along. A character's interactions with her during this time can be the basis for a story, especially if the completion of the dreamer's work is interrupted or threatened in some way. How long the completion of the work takes is up to the Storyteller; it could happen very quickly, like a love-struck young man who sweeps his lady-love off her feet and declares his eternal love for her; or it might take a long while, like an author working on the Great American Novel.

If the Storyteller rules that the attempt to inspire the dreamer is successful, the changeling muse gains Glamour equal to half her Manipulation + Empathy, with adjustments made for how well the inspiration was researched and roleplayed. Distinctively moving and clever inspirations should gain more Glamour, while hurried or repetitious inspirations with no real effort should net less Glamour or fail entirely. If the player mishandles it, you can even rule that the attempt is a botch and tell a character to start over by trying to find something else that can inspire the dreamer. But this shouldn't happen too often.

• **Determine how long before the dreamer can be inspired again.** After such an intense burst of creativity and Glamour, most dreamers are exhausted and cannot immediately be inspired

create again. The length of time before the muse can inspire her again depends on the dreamer's ability in her chosen field. A modestly skilled dreamer could require months (as much as a year) before being able to produce Glamorous works again, while a masterful one (Attribute + Ability total of 9 or greater) may be inspired again almost immediately (in as little as a day). Though sometimes the opposite is true. A novice might be so flushed from the excitement of his creation that he is ready to dive right into another, and the master may so exhausted by the effort that she needs time to rest. The Storyteller can modify this time depending on the effectiveness of the inspiration and how the Kithain intends to inspire the dreamer next. Using the same technique requires more time than coming up with a new means of inspiration. Over time, the original method becomes less and less effective, forcing the changeling to look for a new way.

Rapture

By combining their fae and mortal natures, changelings seek to touch the Dreaming as mortal dreamers do. This way is the most difficult means of reaching epiphany, but perhaps it is the most satisfying since the Glamour comes from the depths of the changeling's own creative soul. Rapture relies heavily on the guidelines for performance given on page 56 since it requires a tremendous artistic effort on the part of the changeling. Achieving Rapture has three steps:

• **Choose an artistic medium.** The Kithain must first choose what form of artistic expression is to be the vehicle for the Rapture. This vehicle can be any form of creativity you wish to allow, and players should be encouraged to be creative in coming up with new forms of artistic expression for their characters. Although Skills like Crafts and Performance are the most commonly used in seeking Rapture, nothing says a Kithain cannot seek to be creative through the medium of computer graphics or programming (Computer), riddles and puzzles (Enigmas), or scientific research (Science). The "eureka moment" of discovery in science can be as much an epiphany as the creation of a great work of art. The character could also create something less tangible, like a lasting romantic relationship, a peaceful community of Kithain commoners and nobility, or a legacy of well-crafted laws and precepts to guide changeling justice and rulership. Anything that draws on the creativity of a character (and the player) is a viable medium for seeking Rapture.

If the player has a particular talent or interest, encourage him to apply it toward a character's attempt at Rapture. If the player can draw or play music, for example, suggest creating an actual picture or song as part of a character's quest for Rapture. Then show it or perform it for the rest of the game troupe. Such a special effort should be rewarded with extra Glamour or the addition of a permanent point of Glamour, since it encourages other players to do likewise. If a player has no artistic Skills, offer other possibilities for Raptures, such as those mentioned before. Perhaps he can design a webpage for the troupe, or he can volunteer at a local crisis hotline, or some other means of inspiring hope, just as their character tries to spread hope and dreams in the story. Again, always reward extra effort.

• **Create a vision or idea.** Once the medium of expression is chosen, the player must come up with a specific work the changeling undertakes. Even players with no ability in their chosen medium should at least invent and describe in much detail the work their character is creating. For instance, a player isn't much of an artist but has a Kithain character who has great artistic ability. The player can still describe a character's efforts and overall goal, which is just as creative as actually doing the work in question. Challenge him to describe the goal of the Rapture so that all troupe members can clearly imagine it. The pursuit of the creative vision can form the basis of a story in the chronicle, or it can take place entirely in a player's blue-book or as part of a special solo game. Try not to let a character's pursuit of Rapture take up too much time during a regular game unless all of the others are occupied with something else. Diverting the story for the sake of a single player doesn't generally sit well.

• **Bring the vision into being.** Once the medium and the work have been decided, a character tries to bring the creative vision into being. This process involves the player actually creating a work of art (as described before), or a character "builds" it within the context of the game. The result depends on a character's facility with the medium (appropriate Attribute + Ability), a character's level of Banality, and the player's work in constructing and describing the creative work. A successful attempt at Rapture generates an amount of Glamour equal to half the Kithain's total Attribute + Ability. For every point the changeling's Banality exceeds her Glamour, subtract one point; for every point that Glamour exceeds Banality, add one. Modify the total based on the roleplaying of the creative effort. An excellent description and effort on the player's part is worth an extra point or two of Glamour, while actually performing an act should merit at least a few extra points of Glamour or even a point of permanent Glamour, just as if the player rolled five or more successes with the dice method.

Ravaging

Ravaging is the simplest form of epiphany and allows a changeling to rip Glamour away from a mortal dreamer. It requires little effort on the Kithain's part, but it implies certain risks because it relies on using the changeling's Banality to steal Glamour. A changeling who utilizes Ravaging too freely may gain Banality for snuffing out the creative spirit of dreamers. Ravaging has two basic steps as follows.

• **Establish a relationship with a mortal.** To Ravage a mortal dreamer, the changeling must first establish some kind of relationship with him. The nature of this relationship can be a very casual friendship — the sort of thing a Skilled Kithain sets up over the course of a single evening. It can have a deeper nature if the Kithain's player desires, and some Unseelie in particular have close friendships and romantic relationships with their Ravaging victims. Establishing the relationship uses the guidelines for social interaction on page 54 and should be roleplayed. The Ravaging effects can be modified if the Storyteller feels the player has done a particularly good or bad job at establishing the relationship.

The choice of victim and the nature of the connection should be related to the changeling's Ravaging Threshold (**Changeling: The Dreaming**, page 215). A Kithain who thrives on Destroying Love, for example, might flirt with his target and try to seduce her in order to inspire jealousy or bring about a breakup. A changeling who prefers to Create Anger might work on wearing away her target's self-control, driving him toward destructive acts of violence. Each player is encouraged to choose a Ravaging Threshold, even players of Seelie characters. The temptation to give in to Ravaging is always present, especially when a choice target presents itself and is perfectly suited to a character's Threshold. A Kithain can Ravage through simple psychic assault, but the use of Ravaging Threshold personalizes the act and stresses roleplaying.

• **Wrest Glamour from them.** Once the Kithain has established a relationship with the victim, she can attempt to tear Glamour from him. The exact moment when the changeling rips away the victim's Glamour should come at the height of the emotion inspired by the Ravager. The rush of Glamour happens at the moment when emotion overcomes the victim. How long the process takes depends on the roleplaying of the Kithain and the judgment of the Storyteller. Some victims may be the work of an hour or two, while others could be cultivated over days or weeks. The longer the process takes, the greater the reward of Glamour. The Ravager gains a base amount of Glamour equal to half her permanent Banality, modified by the length of the relationship and the effectiveness of the player's roleplaying.

Kithain who Ravage too frequently (in the Storyteller's view) risk gaining temporary or permanent Banality for dousing the fires of Glamour within mortal hearts. If a character Ravages indiscriminately or rather poorly, the Storyteller should award him an additional point of temporary Banality. Of course, this award improves a character's ability to gain Glamour through Ravaging, which creates a vicious cycle in which Ravagers become more capable and ravenous until they are finally Undone and self-destruct. Roleplaying the spiraling descent of such a Kithain is an interesting challenge.

Rhapsody

Rhapsody is an Unseelie means of epiphany forbidden by both courts because it permanently douses the spark of Glamour in a mortal dreamer — blazing flame for a brief moment, then burning out the mortal's creative spirit. Rhapsody destroys the mortal's ability to create Glamour in the future and may also earn the Kithain a deadly enemy. Some Kithain still practice Rhapsody from time to time, although it is forbidden. This process has three steps.

• **Establish a relationship with a dreamer.** As with Reverie, the Kithain must establish some kind of relationship with the mortal dreamer with Rhapsody, which can be more casual than the typical dreamer-muse relationship of Reverie. The Kithain plans to use the mortal only once, after all. A group of Kithain can participate in Rhapsody, in which case, they must all have some sort of basic connection with the dreamer, at least in a casual acquaintance. The roleplaying of this relationship is vital, since the Kithain have to set up the circumstances in which

the dreamer will create the greatest masterpiece possible for her. The changeling's player should learn about the dreamer and what great work lies dormant in his spirit to bring that work to light in a blaze of Glamour. The dreamer should trust the Kithain who is leading the Rhapsody somewhat or the attempt will fail.

This part is the hardest of Rhapsody for Unseelie changelings: gaining the trust of a mortal dreamer long enough to inspire her to create, even once. Many Unseelie simply haven't the patience or the capacity for guile to arrange a Rhapsody. The majority of Unseelie, like redcaps or trolls prefer Ravaging, which is not forbidden by their court, to the more complex and dangerous Rhapsody. Only the most twisted Unseelie (or the truly deluded or desperate Seelie) resort to it, often treating it as a tantalizingly naughty art form — all the more appealing because it is forbidden.

• **Invest Glamour in the dreamer.** Once the dreamer is ready to create, each Kithain involved in the Rhapsody invests one to five points of Glamour in the mortal to fire the creative spirit. The dreamer's appropriate Attribute + Ability is used to create the masterpiece, and skilled dreamers produce more Glamour in their final work. There is a more profound effect in burning out a master or a great potential talent than in using up a simple hack. The creation of the dreamer's final work proceeds. How long it takes is up to the Storyteller, but dreamers in the grip of Rhapsody typically work tirelessly: unable to sleep, eat or leave their project until it is finished. Such dreamers lock themselves away from other people and concentrate solely on their creation. (This state may occur in other forms of Reverie, but not as intensely.) This hermit tendency causes trouble if the dreamer's mortal friends and loved ones see the unusual behavior and try to interrupt the creative process or, worse yet, other Kithain notice it and suspect a Rhapsody is in progress. If the mortal can be kept from the work until the creative fervor inspired by the Rhapsody is allowed to pass, or if the mortal is Ravaged before the work is concluded, the Rhapsody is broken and the victim may be saved. It certainly angers the Kithain involved, as they lose any Glamour invested in the dreamer, but the perpetrators may have other things to worry about if their Rhapsody was halted by changeling intervention. Kithain nobility look *very* poorly on Rhapsody and it is typically punished with permanent banishment.

• **Reap Glamour from the dreamer's efforts.** Total the victim's appropriate Attribute + Ability and the number of points of Glamour invested. A third of the total is the number of successes the dreamer gains in the artistic attempt, usually producing a great masterpiece. Any Seelie changeling involved in the Rhapsody gains a number of points of Glamour equal to the successes. An Unseelie changeling gains twice that amount. For multiple Kithain, each participant first gains back the Glamour, and any remaining is divided equally among them. The mortal dreamer becomes burnt-out by the effort, permanently unable to create. The dreamer gains a point of permanent Banality for every 10 points in the original (Attribute + Ability + Glamour) pool (round up). The artistic creation may (Storyteller's discretion) also become dross, containing Glamour equal to the successes generated to create it.

Epiphany and Bedlam

In a story, the balancing factor of epiphany is the constant threat of Bedlam. A changeling who gains too much Glamour,

or who spends too much time seeking epiphanies, may fall prey to madness. The process of slipping into Bedlam is entirely in the hands of the Storyteller, but players can know the warning signs (listed on page 209 of **Changeling: The Dreaming**) and take steps to avoid having their characters slide into lunacy. The character's Kithain friends and allies can also recognize these warnings and try to help the character escape.

Keep in mind that many of the warning signs of Bedlam are tied to epiphany, such as having Glamour higher than both Willpower and Banality, constantly Ravaging, or becoming obsessed with creating art (usually in the seeking of Rapture). A character who spends the majority of her time and energy seeking epiphanies is a candidate for showing the signs of Bedlam; the Storyteller can use the threat of Bedlam to balance the desire of the players (and their characters) to gain Glamour. Use the first stage of Bedlam liberally, inflicting the second threshold only on characters who continually ignore the warning signs. The third threshold of Bedlam, however, should not be inflicted on characters lightly since it is extremely difficult to cure. Make sure the player understands the dangers before consigning a character to utter madness. Of course, if this fall into madness (and a lengthy quest in search of a cure) fits the story of the character and the chronicle, there is no reason to not go ahead with it.

Combat

Descended as they are from tactical war-games, roleplaying games are somewhat obsessed with the minutiae of combat. Even **Changeling** books have a dozen or so pages of combat rules, compared to three pages of rules for social interactions. The reason is because most gamers treat combat as more complex and in need of detailed rules. If this style suits your troupe, then make it the case. Some players want more specified and defined combat systems, both to simulate the nuances of combat and to avoid the vagueness that leads to so many arguments during games of Cops and Robbers. Such troupes should make use of the systems in **Changeling: The Dreaming** (or **World of Darkness: Combat** for a *really* detailed combat system). The **Book of Lost Dreams** provides some hints on using the latter in a **Changeling** chronicle.

For troupes that like a simplified system of combat resolution, two options are offered: The first is a simple dice method based on an idea by Chris Kubasik in his article series "The Interactive Toolkit" in White Wolf's *Inphobia* magazine (issues 50-54); the second choice is an even simpler diceless combat system that relies on the Storyteller's judgment and the players' roleplaying creativity, much like the diceless resolution systems for Perception and social interaction expressed before. Chronicles

can easily combat all four possible systems, depending on the demands of the story and the troupe's desires during any given game. The simplified, diceless method is best suited for quick resolution of combats that are less significant to the overall story, or of combats where drama and roleplaying are more important than dice-rolling and precision. The basic combat system and the advanced systems from **World of Darkness: Combat** can be utilized when more detail and precise maneuvers are called for.

Simplified Combat

Under this system, the various steps of combat resolution are summarized into a single dice roll, using an appropriate Attribute + Ability. The Storyteller sets the difficulty for the roll based on what the player wants to accomplish, and the success determines the outcome. Rather than a long series of initiative attack rolls, damage rolls and soak rolls, the action of the fight is abstract and handled quickly. Each combat turn, players and the Storyteller decide the actions that their characters will attempt. They make a normal initiative roll, then a roll based on an estimated target number.

• If a character gains three successes or more, he accomplishes the task.

• If a character gains less than three successes, he was partially successful.

• If a character fails, he accomplishes nothing.

• If a character botches, he hurts himself.

Objectives range from simple stunts — "I want to knock him off his feet" or "I want to put him in a hold"; to minor injuries — "I shoot him in the leg"; to mortal injuries — "I run through him with a mighty thrust, leaving him bleeding on the floor." The difficulty of the roll depends on the severity of the

effect (see the accompanying chart for suggested difficulties). The harder the action, the higher the difficulty and the greater the possibility for a failure or a botch. Success is not cumulative as in the basic combat system; the results of actions are decided each turn.

A complete success means a character accomplishes the task exactly. If he wanted to kill an opponent, he does. If he wanted to disarm someone, he succeeds. No problem.

A partial success means she did some damage, but not enough to finish the job. The character wanted to kill her opponent, but she inflicted only a grazing blow. She tried to disarm someone and threw him off balance, but she didn't take away his weapon.

A failure is self-explanatory.

Willpower can be used to gain one automatic success, but only if a character rolled at least one success on the dice. Willpower cannot change failure to success in this system, but it may be able to convert a partial success into a complete one.

The Storyteller may adjust difficulty numbers to reflect the ability of various opponents or attacks. For example, cannon fodder opponents might be easy to fight, while chimerical monsters require higher difficulties and/or more successes. Powerful weapons and cantrips can decrease difficulties against some opponents, while weak ones and attacks raise them. The difficulty of a task is also influenced by roleplaying and description on the player's part. A particularly clever approach could lower a difficulty, while poor roleplaying or description might raise it.

This system is *very* bare-bones. It is designed for speed and simplicity. If it causes disputes that slow the game down, refer back to the basic system.

Simplified Combat Resolution Suggestions

Stunts

Objective	Roll	Difficulty
• Kicking in a door	Strength + Athletics	5
• Swinging from a chandelier	Dexterity + Athletics	5
• Yanking a rug out	Strength + Athletics	6
• Grabbing someone	Dexterity + Athletics	6
• Holding onto someone	Strength + Brawling (or Athletics)	6
• Frightening someone	Manipulation + Intimidation	7
• Knocking someone down	Dexterity + Athletics	7

Damage

Objective		Roll	Difficulty
• Disarmed		Dexterity + Attack Skill	7
• Hurt	(1-2 Health Levels)	(appropriate Traits)	7
• Wounded	(3-4 Health Levels)	(appropriate Traits)	8
• Instant knockout		(appropriate Traits)	8
• Death(or severe wound)		(appropriate Traits)	9

Diceless Combat

The diceless combat system is even simpler than the system just given. In this case, the two opponents in combat determine their Dice Pool (Attribute + Ability) and a character with the higher total usually wins. That's it. Everything else is player and Storyteller creativity and roleplaying. Note: I said *usually*. The above statement assumes all other things in the combat remain equal, and that isn't always the case. Players influence the combat outcome through roleplaying and innovative tactics that shift the odds in their favor, or that move the combat from an area where a character is weak (such as sword fighting) to one in which he is more capable (like wrestling or even intimidation).

This system removes most, if not all, of the randomness of combat. A character who is more capable than his opponent can plan to win unless circumstances change. Some consider this option more "realistic" than the dice methods, where a single botched roll may turn the tide of combat. Against superior opponents, characters have to rely on cleverness, trickery and outright treachery if they want to win. Combat here relies on good storytelling and description to give players a feel for their options and to provide more drama than a simple comparison of numbers.

An advantage of the diceless system is that it can be as complex or simple as desired. If characters are fighting cannon fodder, there is no need for complex descriptions or rolls. An uncomplicated description like "you quickly overpower your far inferior opponents" suffices and lets the action of the game proceed without interruption. On the other hand, a climactic duel between opponents of fairly equal ability should be played out in great detail, with each side cautiously testing the other, looking for opportunities and thinking up tactics to give him an edge. The level of detail is then adjusted to match the demands of the story. Naturally, some combats deserve more attention than others, such as a confrontation between characters and an old enemy, a climactic scene, or a turning point in the story.

Players do not know the abilities of their opponents automatically. An Unseelie sidhe might be a master duelist or a posturing amateur. Only by engaging him in combat can a character know for sure. Even then, who's to say the sidhe isn't holding back and trying to lull a character into a false sense of security before moving in for the kill? A player character can likewise try to "fake out" opponents by fighting defensively, not showing all of his ability or coming up with other tricks and forms of psychological warfare. A well-placed taunt or jibe can distract an opponent or enrage him, causing him to fight without heed of defense.

This system is *very* loose and open to Storyteller interpretation. It is recommended for skilled Storytellers who are willing to make some judgment calls regarding the actions of the player characters. It is flexible, but this lack of structure and dice-rolling may be difficult for some players to get used to at first. Still, it provides a dramatic, story-driven system of resolution. Give it a try and see how it works for your troupe.

Cantrips

Cantrips are part of the feel of **Changeling** and an important weapon in the Kithain arsenal. The use of cantrips in the story requires more attention than the basic dice-systems in **Changeling: The Dreaming** — particularly in the cases of cantrips involving Perception, which invoke the Parrot Syndrome, and those that entail social interaction or affect only the character invoking them. This section provides some quick-resolution guidelines that Storytellers can employ to speed up cantrip use and provide dramatic descriptions and results of their effects.

Bunks

Bunks, the prices Glamour exact for its power, are an important part of roleplaying. Player creativity in coming up with new and interesting Bunks suited to their characters should be encouraged. Reward them with higher levels for truly original Bunks that are suited to a character, the cantrip and the situation. Many changelings have Bunks they use with certain cantrips, some of which become "trademarks" for a character — like a sluagh who always uses an antique deck of tarot cards as a Bunk for Soothsay, or a nocker childling who uses a colorful piece of Play-Doh™ as a Bunk for Primal. Players should think of a list of potential Bunks outside the game, either by writing them on their character sheets or in their blue-books to refer to when in need of a quick Bunk. Randomizers, like playing cards or trading cards with pictures on them, can also be used to inspire Bunks, along with items from a player's treasure box, especially items a character typically carries around.

If using a diceless resolution system, take the level of the Bunk into account when figuring the success of the cantrip. High-level Bunks make the cantrip more likely to succeed and produce the desired effect, in addition to enhancing the story.

Personal Cantrips

Personal cantrips affect only the changeling who uses them. This effect may be physical or chimerical, like the use of Heather Balm or Oakenshield. It includes cantrips that provide the user with some special insight or Knowledge, like Soothsay and cantrips like Willow Whisper. The results can be quickly decided based on the needs of the story. If the cantrip effect is not overly momentous, there is no need for a roll. Consider the situation and the changeling's ability with the desired cantrip and decide the effect. Perhaps the Heather Balm rapidly heals a minor injury, so there's no need to resort to a dice roll and slow down the game.

In the case of Knowledge cantrips, the Parrot Syndrome is invoked. The Storyteller may wish to roll or determine the results of Knowledge cantrips secretly so the player does not know for certain if the information is valid or accurate. In

the case of diceless resolution of Knowledge cantrips, the Storyteller can resolve the results to suit the needs of the story. If the player characters require a better clue than the cantrip might normally give them, the Storyteller is able to arrange things so the cantrip gives a bit more success (or a bit less) as needed. The information can be passed on to the player just like other information a character notices (see Perception, page 52, for guidelines).

In a more open chronicle, the Storyteller might even allow the *player* to determine the result of a particular Knowledge cantrip based on the number of successes. In this case, the player makes up the information gained from the cantrip and the Storyteller decides whether or not the information is true based on the success of the cantrip and the demands of the story. The situation requires a Storyteller who thinks on her feet and modifies the story as needed, and it can produce very rewarding results. For example, the player of a character with Soothsay performs an Omen cantrip to learn more about a mysterious enemy characters have run afoul of recently. The character seeks visions in a sacred fire prepared with rare herbs and the player scores an extraordinary five successes on the roll. The character comes out of her trance and announces the mysterious enemy is none other than her own mentor! The Storyteller planned for the enemy to be someone else, but the player's idea fits the available facts and is so intriguing that he latches onto it and decides it is true. The player wouldn't have offered the possibility if she didn't want the Storyteller to pursue it. Of course, the other characters are shocked at the revelation and have no way of knowing for certain if it is so. They go to confront the mentor, hoping all the while their seer friend is wrong. When the confrontation comes, it is sure to be a dramatic one!

Resisted Cantrips

If the Storyteller and players wish to keep events moving along briskly, then the effects of cantrips used against targets other than the caster may be resolved without dice rolls. Each cantrip should be decided case by case. If the use of the cantrip is not vital to the story, there is no need for a roll. The Storyteller simply judges the effectiveness of the cantrip against the difficulty using the Automatic Success rules as a guideline (**Changeling: The Dreaming**, page 197). Examples include using Holly Strike to break down a door, or Hopscotch to jump up onto a building, and so forth. This also includes cantrip use by Storyteller characters. If the Storyteller wants Duke Dray's Holly Strike cantrip to break down the door of the cottage where the player characters are hiding, there really isn't a need to roll for the cantrip's results, provided the Duke is reasonably skilled in the use of Primal.

If the cantrip result is vital to the story or seriously in doubt, it is better to roll the result, unless all the players trust the Storyteller's judgment.
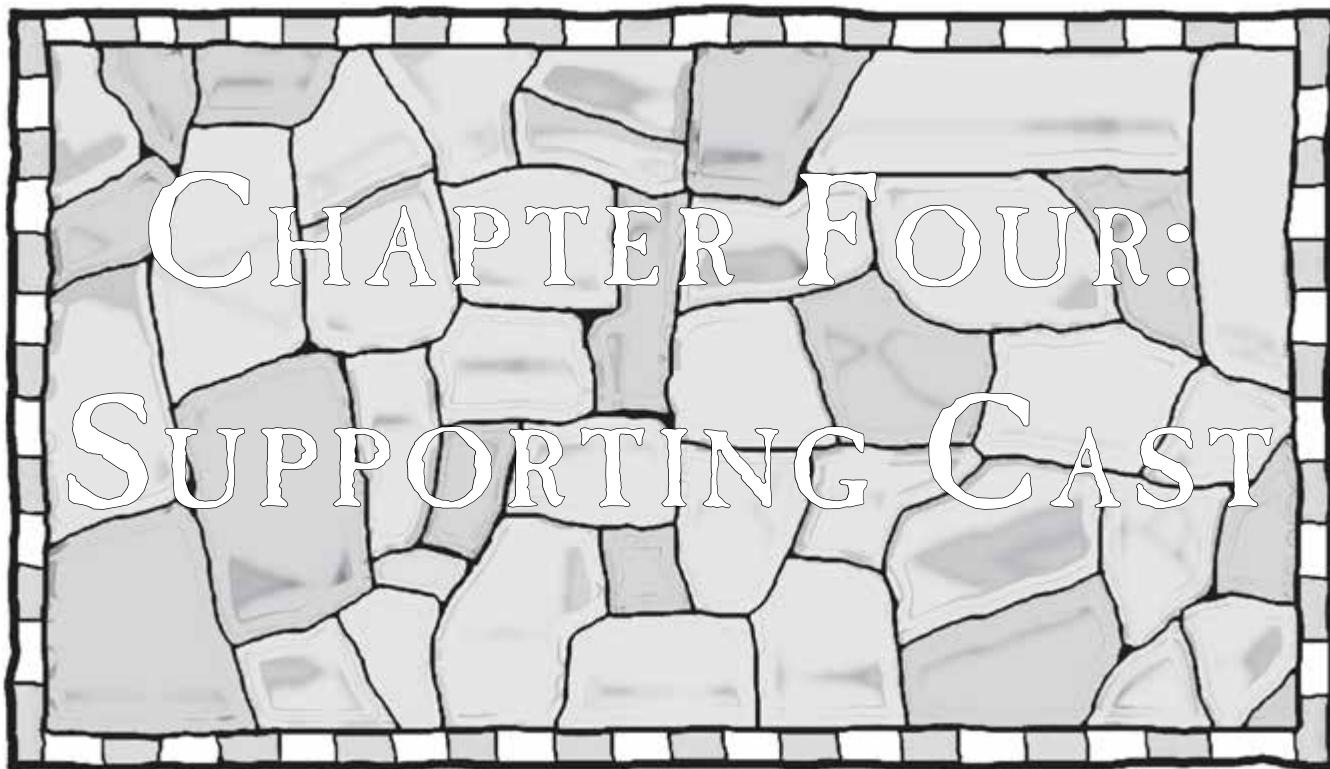
CHAPTER FOUR: SUPPORTING CAST

This maid had nearly reached her home
When she was startled by a cry.
And she turned to look around her
And her love was standing by.
His hand was pointing to the stars
And his eyes glazed at the light,
And with a smiling countenance
He vanished from her sight.
— Loreena McKennitt, "Standing Stones"

While in the midst of a **Changeling** chronicle, it is easy to forget that there are other beings in the world besides the Kithain. Mortals, Kindred and even chimera are all swept away in ongoing quests for Arcadia. And yet it is these others, from the magical chimera to the mundane mortal, who create the backdrop for all stories involving the Kithain. Remembering that others exist and even allowing them to come to the forefront from time to time enriches any chronicle. Indeed, it could prove to be a life-saver for chronicles where characters have become a little too self-absorbed. Introducing several new mortal Storyteller characters can offer a breath of fresh air, and an interesting chimera can create magic in a chronicle that has become too banal. Also, the introduction of a vampire (player- or Storyteller character) can add a bit of mystery.

Whenever you bring a new character onto the set, always be careful when you do it *just* to spice things up.

Every character (even Storyteller ones) need motivations and goals. Before you introduce a new character, ask yourself: What does this person want and how far are they willing to go to get it? It may even be worth while to go through the selection of questions provided on page 123 of the **Changeling** rulebook. You probably won't have the time to do this with every Storyteller character, but having defined urges and goals for even the minor characters can be quite rewarding.

This chapter offers a look into some of the more neglected aspects of **Changeling**. By no means should you need to include all of these aspects into your chronicle; instead, use it as a guide for the possibilities that exist, and perhaps in reading it, you will stumble across some aspect of **Changeling** that you hadn't considered before. Follow your imagination…you never know where it might lead.
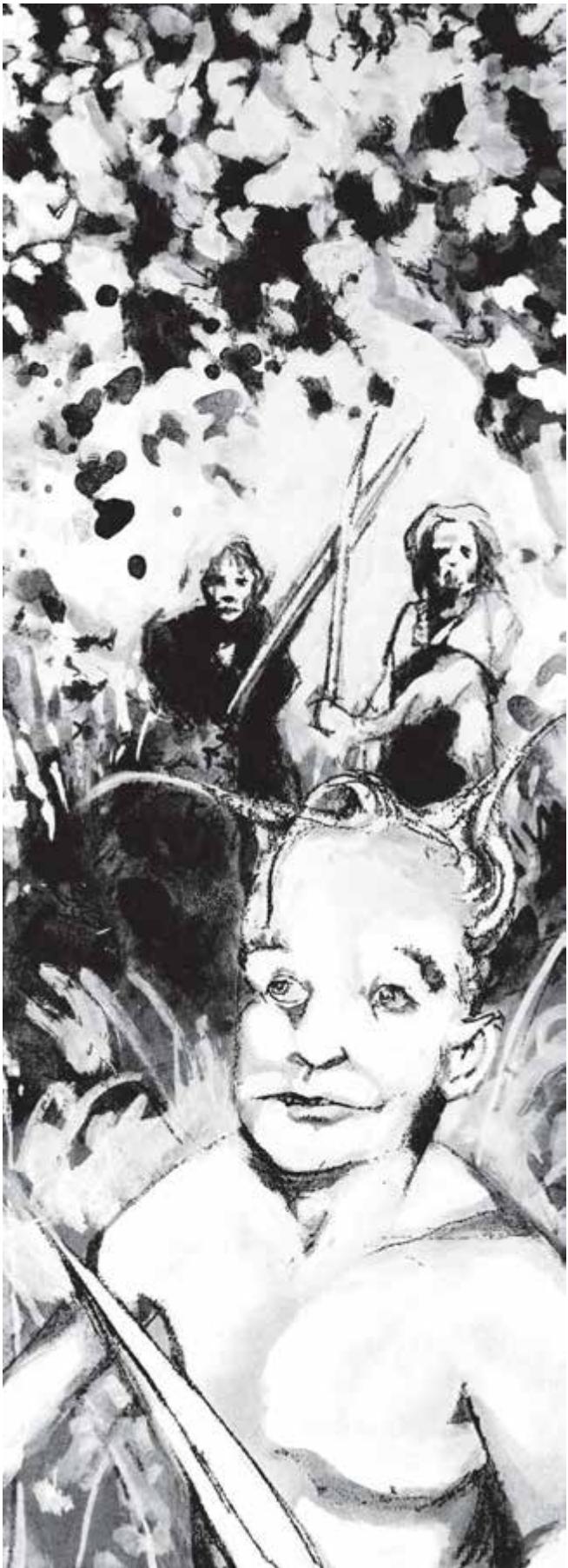
Mortals

Lord, what fools these mortals be!
— William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The largest population group of the World of Darkness, mortals can too often be ignored in Storyteller games. This happenstance is unfortunate because it avoids so much of the world around characters, and it is doubly unfortunate in **Changeling**, which requires by its very nature the presence of mortals on a regular basis, if not in every game. The world of changelings is built on the dreams of mortals, and these dreams and nightmares keep changeling souls alive.

Even from a mechanics perspective, mortals are more important to **Changeling** than other Storyteller games. Beyond their point values as Contacts, Retainers, Merits and Flaws, mortals serve only as a food source for vampires and a reserve of Pathos for wraiths. They have no mechanics value to shapeshifters and are actually a detriment through Paradox for mages. Changelings, however, need mortals for Glamour, and mortal contact prevents Bedlam; they also pose a threat in the form of Banality.

Even without delving into the deeper stories, changelings and mages are the only ones who are not discouraged from keeping contact with the mortals that birthed and raised them (by the nature of the game). Wraiths are forbidden to interact with mortals by the Code of Charon, and by the minor fact that they are indeed dead. Vampires who reveal themselves to mortals have violated the Masquerade — their most sacred law. Garou are simply taken away from their mortal families and thrust into a war for the planet's survival, and they are taught that contact with mortals causes more pain than it is worth because mortals cannot handle what the Garou has become.

Conversely, changelings, those who don't need to be kidnapped away from a particularly banal home, remain to grow with two lives. The life they have as a mortal — with school, work, friends, bullies, cousins, and the aunt who pinches cheeks — still exists when they learn of their life as a creature of the fae in a world of dragons, sorcerers, sovereigns and castles. And the people in those lives, the mortal people, remain.

Job, Friends and Family

The primary concern that many characters will have, beyond the Banality of those mortals around them, is staving off Bedlam. But this eschewing is more than having a day job, an undefined or poorly defined couple of mortal friends (who are probably a character's Contacts), and a living, if estranged, mortal family. Each of these areas of mortal life that can hold the madness of Bedlam at bay has a wealth of roleplaying and story potential. Don't let players get off easily by just accepting that their characters have access to these areas of mortal life.

The Workplace

Six to ten hours of a changeling's weekday are, or should be, at work or school (except, of course, summer), provided that they have a job or go to school. Teachers and employers surround the changeling. Fellow students see her as anything

from "weird" to "cool," and co-workers have about the same view. Each one has an impact on the changeling. Depending on the job and the position, patrons and employees could also be present, and they have their own influences. Granted, most changelings with "day jobs" do their best to have artistic ones — or at least jobs with a fair amount of personal freedom. However, if the changeling is stuck with both job and school (wilders mostly), they may have the unenviable position of being stuck in retail (talk about Banality being hell-on-Earth!). Even artistic jobs have non-changelings present, and the influences and opinions are still a factor.

Take a moment to look at any mortal jobs your changeling characters might have, or the level of school they are in, or both. Do they have Teachers who encourage the creativity and imagination that are the natural province of children? Or are they victims of conformist Autumn People who have the thought that children are better off if they join in with the crowd? Do their co-workers see them as fun eccentrics or as crazy loons? Are they ostracized at school because they're dreamers, or are they seen as cool, mysterious musician types? Each of these elements has shaped every gamer, every Storyteller, every person, and they should shape your characters as well. Some of these things may seem trivial, but regarding characters still in school, they're far from it. Peer pressure exists at all ages and in all social situations, and anyone who has to spend much time in a social setting is exposed to it. The Storyteller must decide how much of it is encouraging, how much is laden with Banality,

and how much he wants to use this atmosphere in his plotlines. Naturally, if the player is choosing to ignore this facet of her life, she should feel the consequences (see the Bedlam warning signs checklist, pg. 209 in **Changeling: The Dreaming**). The work and school atmospheres don't have to impact everything, but if an event is to happen at 10 A.M. on a Tuesday, it's helpful to know where your characters are going to be and what sort of accidental witnesses there could be.

Defining some fellow students and a co-worker or two could provide some interesting subplots, or even storylines, as these unconnected innocents become caught in the crossfire of whatever events the Storyteller might have put together. If, say, the changeling works at an antique clothing store, what happens as Samhain approaches and Unseelie childlings and wilders raid the store looking for costume pieces? Or when the sluagh emerge looking for costumes that the store doesn't intend to sell because they're a bit on the ratty side, how do the other employees react when the changeling hardly blinks? They don't need statistics, but an idea to the mortal's Willpower and Banality help when deciding how she reacts to the things happening around her. Such an adventure could lead to the co-worker becoming more than a casual acquaintance, and perhaps even evolving into a friend.

Friends

Everyone has some. And yes, a character's oathcircle makes up most of a character's close friends, but there are always go-

ing to be friends outside the oathcircle, and most of them are likely to be mortals.

The story potential for mortal friends being caught up in the changeling's life are a thousand times more likely than those with mere co-workers. Friends, or at least real friends, care about each other, and when a changeling disappears for a week or more in the Dreaming, mortal friends are going to notice and wonder what is up...and they're going to ask. Even if the friends aren't around all the time, living out of state or something similar, they are going to wonder when someone starts to drop off the face of the Earth, especially since changelings can do that quite literally.

Close friends are guaranteed to become involved in the events of changelings' lives. They are the ones around when the chimerical monster enters the room or is caught with the changeling when the Shadow Court comes to call.

A subcategory of friends is lovers. While lovers can, for grumps, be family (in the form of spouses), wilders almost never tie themselves down (note: I say almost never), and for them, lovers qualify as very close friends. By lovers, I don't mean just sexual partners, but (usually) a special someone in a changeling's life, possibly even the target of a True Love Merit. If the relationship is that close, a changeling may protect the mortal — keep his lover separate from his life at court or in the Dreaming rather than enchanting her (see **The Enchanted**).

Lovers don't like secrets. Gifts are there to be ferreted out as a game, and serious secrets bring up the dreaded issue of trust. Most mortal lovers aren't going to buy the "I did it for your protection" line, especially after the evil-nasty has kidnapped her and held her hostage in a world of nightmares. And leaving a mortal lover unprepared for such an event could easily mean the end of the relationship. Most mortal friends aren't going to buy "it was for your protection" either, and close friendships have ended for far pettier reasons.

A Storyteller should decide early on how close a changeling's mortal friends, however few that may be, really are to a character. A changeling may not trust a friend at all but may still care deeply and genuinely for the person, which should be done with the cooperation of the player for the most part. More so than fellow students, friends need to be fully defined and integrated into a character's life. How close a friend is will probably change over the course of a changeling's life, and his best buddy in grade school may not merit more than a "Hi" in the high-school halls. Springing current friends on characters, and their players, could result in a protest if the player finds the friend "inappropriate," or if the player is in an uncooperative mood. Old friends, on the other hand, can easily be a surprise, especially for grumps who have most likely gone through at least three schools (grade school, high school and college) and have been friends with many people. Amusing scenes can happen as the changeling has to decide if he takes his old pal to his favorite pub (which just so happens to be a freehold), or if he leaves his changeling friends for a night of reminiscing, leaving himself open to attack by unfriendliness (if that is a major problem).

An entertaining twist could be the mere mortal friend who isn't mortal. As the changeling struggles to protect his friend from draconic chimera and foul-tempered beasties, his friend is trying to keep the Black Spiral Dancers from discovering the freehold that they want to corrupt into a hive; he is using his Garou kin, for he is actually Kinfolk, to help him. The friend is still just a mortal, but he's got some rather heavy-artillery allies. This twist gives the Storyteller some entertaining and amusing scenes, and also the opportunity to introduce that player who wants to play in your game but doesn't feel comfortable or knowledgeable with **Changeling** — you could begin one of the omnipresent crossover chronicles.

Unless you are running a crossover game, I don't recommend making a mortal friend one of the other supernatural types without the player at least knowing about it.

Family

The family may be dead, the members may have ostracized a character, but by virtue of being born, every character has a mortal biological family. But, how many people of the family does a character have contact with, and why not more or less? If a character's mortal family is still living, they may be worried about their crazy son/sister/uncle/niece/father, etc. And they may want to help him (which usually leads to a sanitarium), or they may have given up on the loon a long time ago and written him out of the will. Unless a character's background states that his mortal family, at least those who know he exists, is all dead, the family could show up at any time. Fun. The family could be concerned about a character and want to patch up old differences; the reasons are limitless. The winter holidays (whichever a character observes) is a time of great roleplaying potential, as many is the mortal who attempts reconciliation on these family-oriented occasions.

Naturally, there are some elements of family that a character chooses, such as a spouse. And, of course, a character has influence over his children. Much of what was written about lovers applies to spouses as well; though, only the most mild-mannered of women respects a sidhe's double-life for long, especially once she sees the other women he "works late" with — who also happen to be sidhe.

Children are a more complex lot. Children who are kinain or Kithain will be let in on mom's secret quickly, while children who are mortals may never be told; although that instance is unlikely, except for adult children, who are allowed to think that that was just their parents humoring their childhood imagination.

Family makes great pawns for villains. Nieces and nephews who mean well will want crazy Aunt Maureen to talk to a "family friend," who is probably an Autumn Person, or even Dauntain, masquerading as a good-intentioned psychologist. Young family members, like cousins and siblings, make great lust interests for Shadow Court constituents, especially Ravagers, or such wonderful creations such as the Ganconer. Children of grumps and single parents of childlings are great victims for antagonists such as these. And as with lovers, mortal family can be held by the villain just to get to the changeling.

The family can be an antagonist in and of itself. The Werewolf Flaw, Persistent Parents, is one crossover Flaw that could be used by wilders, and even some childlings, who have left their

mortal family behind because of Banality or other problems. The family will most likely want a character back, but on the member's terms, and they won't understand the changeling's "new life." They may object on conservative religious grounds. Woe to the changeling who comes from a Fundamentalist family, and oh! the possibilities for the Storyteller. Even more complex is the position of the eshu whose mortal family is Orthodox Muslim, and she has memories — the attendant attitude of times from before Mohammed was born, then she is a changeling and a mortal child of the 20th century. The family conflicts and story possibilities are boundless.

The changeling's immediate family should be detailed while a character is being written — nothing more than who is still living, who is dead, how many siblings, their gender and if they are older or younger than a character should be determined right away. Yet, as the family becomes defined through play, the Storyteller (and the player) needs to keep a record of the family tree, especially once parents and siblings obtain names. More distant relatives, if used, can come from anywhere, unless the player already defined them in his character's background.

If the Storyteller doesn't want to use these potentials, that's OK, but as every character has some of these situations in her life, these subplots can help a Storyteller if he is in a scrape for story ideas. Family, friends and workplace-related storylines should be mostly subplots and thus rarely rise to the position of main plot. The game is about changelings, after all. Yet, the influence of the mortal world in the changeling's life is always there, and some issues are denigrated if there is a supernatural explanation for them.

The Enchanted

These special mortals, granted entry into the world of changeling, go beyond the categories of friends and family. Brought into the Dreaming by the host, sometimes against their will, the enchanted find themselves woven into the strands of courtly intrigue and high adventure more tightly than ordinary mortals. This situation is true in part because the time they spend under the enchantment puts them closer to changelings than any other mortal could understand; for they join in the changeling world and see the wonders that most mortals can only dream of, and even those dreams, and nightmares, fall far short of the real Dream.

It is doubtful that players will have their characters enchant mortals for more than a day or two, except perhaps for lovers, but other changelings may well have dozens of enchanted mortals surrounding them. **The Enchanted** is a good source for how and why the changelings enchant mortals, but the book's character resource focuses on kinain characters. Beyond that, how a player would have a character view becoming one of the enchanted, and how the Storyteller needs to use those same characters aren't necessarily the same. Of the four "types" of enchanted mortals presented in **The Enchanted**, retainers and slaves are not likely to be created by player characters unless the chronicle is either very sidhe-heavy and political, or either is filled with Unseelie and Shadow Court bastards. An

oathcircle could conversely encounter enchanted mortals in any of these situations as they walk through the tangled webs of the changeling world around them.

Retinues

While the courtly places of hangers-on, lower nobles, and up-and-coming knights are filled in a sidhe's court by other changelings, those sidhe who are anal enough to have alienated the commoners find a dearth of changelings willing to serve in a lesser capacity. Even those who are not as ostracized, may well find some mortals better suited to serve as stewards and seneschals than changelings are. The available mortals aren't going to handle working for an eccentric who claims to be a duke in the Kingdom of Apples, so they have to be enchanted.

Mortals in service to a noble are loyal to their lord, and all servants are an superb source of information for an attentive boggan or clever pooka. Even if the sidhe in question is the type with a lump of coal in his posterior, mortal retainers are not likely to provide information that knocks the noble down from his lofty position — a notch or two in his pride, perhaps, but it won't destroy him. There are exceptions, of course. A plot where characters are trying to find the traitor to the noble's court could teach characters to pay attention to mortals, and it might get the sidhe to give more alertness to the help if an enchanted mortal is the betrayer. A mortal could serve as a red herring in the same sort of plot.

Dreamers

The object of changeling muses, dreamers are in a unique position among the enchanted: They give changelings the precious resource of Glamour, and some changelings, in turn, give some of that Glamour back to show the artist the true beauty in the changeling world.

There is a danger to showing this world to the dreamer. Having a lower Banality than the population at large, dreamers retain more of what they see and hear. This ability may cause them to seek more and turn what was a source of Glamour into one of danger for the changeling who first enchanted them.

Also, a dreamer who has been overexposed to Glamour, and who has turned out lackluster work trying to capture it, may blame the changeling for the decline in his artwork. This dreamer may then turn against the hazy memories he has of the fae, raise his Banality, or even become one of the Autumn People in return for this perceived betrayal.

Mortal Love

Much of what applies to lovers who are not enchanted still applies to those who are. Unless the changeling is willing to risk her lover becoming dream-struck, the times when he is enchanted are removed by the Mists, leaving the same situation as before the enchantment. There may even be more resentment as the lover remembers being let in on a secret; however, when the changeling tells the lover the truth, it is so fantastic he cannot believe it, and therefore she must be lying.

Those rare lovers who can accept, without enchantment, what the changeling is are the most prized, but they are hard to find

beyond the kinain. Most lovers still feel the resentment of being left out of a part of their lover's lives, and this segregation can lead to jealousy and paranoia in those who lack self-confidence.

A lover, mortal or otherwise, is a difficult thing for the Storyteller to roleplay for a character. It's easiest when the genders of the player and Storyteller match their sexual orientations, but that match can lead to a dangerous spill-over if no one is careful. Be observant to your players when taking on this roll through the Storyteller. What seems like a simple session can have serious repercussions for the whole game.

Slaves

When working against the Unseelie and the Shadow Court, mortal slaves could be a great boon to adventurous characters. Organizing a slave revolt creates a great distraction. Some slaves may not realize that they are actual slaves, or that any of this horror is actually happening; they are unable to handle the truth of what they see and experience (probably as an early stage of being dream struck), but it may all be a nightmare — and they hope that they wake up before anything too evil happens.

Sometimes those who have been slaves for a long time become comfortable with the idea. It's not a pleasant thought, but it does happen. Would-be rescuers could be betrayed by the very mortals that they have come to rescue. Again, it's likely that the slaves are somewhat dream-struck, but being this way should not be an excuse every time.

Using the enchanted mortals in your story is just a little different from using other mortals. While enchanted, mortals are aware of the dream world around them, but they are still mortals. And with the exception of kinain, they are unable to truly face the dangers of the chimerical world enveloping them.

Other Mortals

Unless your characters practically live in the Dreaming and never leave the freehold (in which case, they are headed straight for Bedlam), they will interact with mortals. From the poor sap working the counter at a fast-food joint to the fellow patron of the arts, mortals are everywhere, and each one could, and should, have her own story. The question is: Will her story interact with the story of the changeling?

Not every Joe Schmoe should have a background and a personality. (Although that is what I've heard intense game masters do, which begs the question, where do they find enough time to do that much detail?) Time and resources don't permit that level of detail for most of us. But don't give a character a personality just because he's significant in that session's story. If characters frequent a particular store, pub, or restaurant, create some of the personalities in that place to make it come a little more alive. Does one of the characters own or work in the bar? Who are some of

the regulars? Does the sidhe have all of her clothes custom-designed and created? What is her tailor like? What about the assistants? Who else goes to that tailor? If the only mortals who have names are the ones that are immediately significant to the adventure, then any time you introduce a mortal by name, players are going to pick up on that character's significance well before the characters. I know that casts of thousands are hard to maintain as Storyteller, especially when time is limited, but without the supporting cast, the movie doesn't seem as real.

Church and State,
or the Mortal as Antagonist

The reasons why a mortal could be an antagonist number many, but just because the mortal is opposing the characters does not mean that that mortal is allied with, or being manipulated by the villain of the story. But a mortal could be the primary antagonist or even a villain in a story, or even in a whole chronicle. But for the most part, a mortal, with little or no knowledge of the changeling world, is going to be an obstacle for the changelings for mundane and banal reasons.

These reasons are hardly ones for not using them — mostly as plot devices, true, but they still have their place. Depending on the dominant age group of your characters, antagonists can be the school bully, or the co-worker bucking for the grump's job, or the would-be prom queen who just can't stand that she has to compete with the sidhe whose beauty blows hers away. To some extent, these characters can be designed and played-up for laughs, but these antagonists can be a serious threat in other situations. The mortal jock could easily follow his troll competition home to try to discover what sort of training he does, or see something that could have him kicked off the team. When the troll starts talking to things that aren't there, our mortal jock may have a case. Of course, if the troll goes Wyrd, then the jock may doubt his *own* sanity.

While not as prevalent as church once was, many families attend some religious service at least once a year. Many go more frequently. Younger wilders are dragged there until they enter high school. And for childlings, the Church (being the one that I myself am most familiar with) is Banality central, for it provides an interesting source for allies (the crazy old lady that everyone humors) and antagonists (the preacher who thinks that imagination is the work of the devil); neither of whom need be anything more than mortal. Think about your own religious experiences. Depending on how you, as Storyteller, want to use such characters, there are possibilities for storylines here that are rarely touched on. What if the heir to a noble's title is in danger of becoming Undone because her well-intentioned and religious parents drag her to church every Sunday? The stories need careful thought and consideration for players' own views on religion (Christians have a problem with being portrayed as the enemy, no matter how valid it may seem in your experience). But the possibilities of stories centering around a changeling's mortal experiences at church are there, waiting to be exploited.

Furthermore, the state, in the form of the police, makes a great plot device. Characters moving too fast across town? Throw in a police car to pull them over. It adds an element of action and excitement as the nocker's player reaches for that Drive Pool of dice, and the rest of the players hasten to inform you on how they are bracing themselves, or how they plan to worm their way out of this one.

The Dauntain and the Autumn People

Ah, the classics. Although the Dauntain are technically no more mortal than any other changeling or mage, they work with mortals, notably Autumn People, who are the classic mortal villains (especially psychologists and psychiatrists), and there is nothing wrong with using the classics.

However, fighting shrinks gets stale fast. Other examples of Autumn People seem more comic relief than actual opponents, such as the overprotective mother and the librarian. Teachers are another source, but not all teachers discourage imagination, so be careful. Teachers that make good Autumn People are not limited to any one department, either; some departments are more likable than others, though. Teachers who are Autumn People think that the students will do better if they conform to the norm — whatever that is — and are "trying to help" by killing what makes the changeling, and others, unique and different. They are the ones who give the popular kids higher grades because they don't dress outlandishly and don't look like the kind to cause trouble. These A's are rewards for being normal, for fitting in, for letting dreams be dictated. And there is little to be done about these teachers; perhaps a storyline exploring why these teachers are so banal could work, as the changelings attempt to help them find the wonder in life again.

A more direct villain is the preacher mentioned above as a Dauntain. He knows evil is out there (Amen!). He knows the devil has taken over the souls of innocents (Amen!). He knows the evil must be driven out of our children (Amen!). And he has no compunctions about using Inquisition-esque techniques to get the devil (actually the faerie souls) out of the children of his church. (Can he get an Amen? *Amen!*). Unlike teachers, the preacher is a villain who actively pursues the changelings and attacks their existence. His near-Chrysalis may have shaken his faith in God, and some people can't handle that fact. Dealing with the preacher could create a rough story, or even a major subplot.

The most insidious Autumn Person, however, is not likely to be someone that characters have ever met before — for example, the local TV program director. There is a reason why there is nothing on TV and it has nothing to do with a lack of quality programs. It is an evil plot hatched by an Autumn Person or a Dauntain to sap the wills and creativity out of people by sucking them into a world that is too perfect and too funny, and where everything works out in the end. It could happen.

In any use of the Autumn People or the Dauntain, the overall goal is set...the destruction of a little bit of hope and dreams and individuality. They fight with Banality and some of them even know a little bit of the truth behind changelings, even if they don't recognize it. They are the darkest and the most determined to destroy the fae soul, and they use the system against the changelings, which makes fighting them that much harder. **The Autumn People** is a good sourcebook for using these two powerful forces of Banality.

While the Dauntain and the Autumn People seem to be the only antagonists that mortals can present, just because a mortal impedes a changeling doesn't mean they are doing it with the intentions of imposing banal reality on the changeling world. The changeling lives in two worlds and mortals aren't likely to have much knowledge, understanding or respect for the one they can't see. They don't see the dragon menacing the city, just the changeling trying to climb the lamp post. They don't hear the music of sprites, just the blare of the city, or the chirping of crickets in the country. They don't understand, and that is what makes mortals the most dangerous.

The Numbers Game

While the statement "never give the Storyteller characters numbers unless you plan on letting players kill them"

might be a time and energy saver, not to mention good advice, there is a basic flaw in this sentiment. What about when characters need help? Some players react badly when you don't roll dice for Storyteller characters. This is not universally true, but many is the player who dreads "may the script be with you" type stories. As a rule, the Willpower and Banality of most Storyteller characters should be marked down somewhere. The 3 x 5 cards are recommended because they are of value when you have dozens of characters of which to keep track. What is needed is a general idea of how many dice to roll for the mortal to hit, how much damage they do on average, and what they roll to dodge and soak. Also, any pertinent Merits and Flaws should be taken note of when a mortal becomes central to the story.

The use of mortals, or other lower-powered Storyteller characters, is discussed in the majority of resources for Storytellers and game masters. For some games, mortals are not over-important, but for **Changeling**, where they and their right to dream are an essential part of every kith — whether they acknowledge it or not — mortals are the most essential resource a Storyteller has.

Chimera

"It's so stimulating being your hat."
— The Hat, Labyrinth

They surround changelings in the Dreaming. Whole buildings are crafted from the stuff of dreams. Creatures of all shapes and sizes walk with changelings in their world of possibilities — some as loyal companions, others as threats or dangers. What a waste then for the Storyteller who ignores these members of a chronicle's supporting cast, for they are the essence of the changeling's world. In a game where the very sum and substance is dreams, the voices of those dreams, in the form of chimera, should be brought forth and heard.

Using Chimera

Incorporating the chimerical members of the changeling's world into the supporting cast may seem to be more trouble than it's worth, but not so. Chimera add a point of view and a voice for the Storyteller that are separate from anything the characters can imagine. No character will have a clearer perspective on what the Storyteller envisions for her version of the Dreaming and the changeling world than the chimera she creates and controls. And no character can better describe the world that the Storyteller desires.

Chimera should not overpower characters, with the exception of chimerical antagonists who will eventually be overcome, but it should complement characters and the story that the players and the Storyteller are creating.

Chimera is found throughout the changeling's world, and it can be used to further the story and the chronicle.

Independents

Many chimera are going to just "be there," surrounding characters in the world of the fae, much like mortals encompass them in the world of dreams. The story of "Toys will be Toys," has some delightful scenes involving independent chimera, a few of which have influenced chimera. I have created both as a player and a Storyteller. Like mortals in the mundane world, independent chimera can be left as part of the background (created by the Storyteller only to complete the scene) or the Storyteller can use them as launching points for an adventure.

Orphan chimera are related to independents, but most have been twisted into antagonists by their independence, at least for a while. Others are still guarding or are there to be helpful, even if their creators have been lost to Banality — or were never more than mortal children in the first place.

Companions

It's a safe bet that at least one player in every game is going to give his character a chimerical companion, who can either sit there and do nothing, except when players bring her up, or she can be part of the adventure from day one.

Now, I'll be the first to admit that keeping track of three to eight players, two or three prominent Storyteller characters, a supporting cast and a horde of villains creates havoc enough without adding an additional cast from whatever the player's fevered imaginations create. But they were indeed created,

and players don't give the Storyteller any strings that they don't want him to pull.

So, you use companions the same way you use any other regular Storyteller character. Chimerical companions get into trouble, spot details that characters might have missed, and offer a running commentary on the story at hand. They are also there to be sent ahead as a scout, essentially just like any other Storyteller character that the Storyteller brings along on an adventure.

Companions do need their own personalities, though. As Storyteller, use any and all information that the player is willing to give you about the chimera, but don't tweak it too much unless the data the player offers is too vague. After all, this character is one that the player created and she has some definite ideas how her character's companion should act.

In game-play, chimerical companions can be used to "fill in" if everyone blows a Perception roll, or if characters are wandering too far off to chase after red herrings. The chimera can point out a clue that the players might have missed that could bring them back on track. Don't misuse or abuse this story method, though, because the players will then assign too much importance to anything the companion does or says. It does not do to rely on the chimera "if we mess up."

Conversely, when players send the chimera to go scouting, don't forget that the companions are out there doing just that. This skill depends on what characters are having the chimera scout out and on the individual temperaments of the chimera. So, remember that they are out there, else there will be cries of "Why didn't (name of chimera) warn us?" and other calls of foul.

Mounts deserve a special mention. Although they are much like other chimerical companions, mounts are helpers to the changelings with which they ally themselves. This definition, however, does not mean that the mount is going to be subservient to the changeling. Anyone who has ridden horses knows that the animals have their own ideas, and their chimerical cousins are no different. If the mount is blessed with the power of speech (and the changeling cursed by it), then the changeling has the questionable advantage of knowing when the poor mount is overloaded better than with a silent horse. Of course, the knight also has to hear about every niggling detail while the horse is carrying the extra weight, or if he is hungry, or if he has any other problem that the changeling rider can't take the time to attend to — generally because he is chasing, or fleeing from, an enemy at the time.

Guardians

Childlings may have their companions formed more as guardians than as companions, especially those who come from houses that are...less conducive for dreams of hope. Whether these guardians are dragons or dogs, they are fiercely loyal to the childling that they guard, even as that childling develops

to being a wilder or a grump. A touching, heartfelt character could be the chimerical dog who defends his grump troll master, even though the troll can probably take more than the chimerical hound.

Some locations in the Dreaming have their own chimerical guardians, especially freeholds that extend from the mortal world into the Dreaming itself. The guardians are as varied as the freeholds they watch over, and the powers should be indicative of the power of that freehold.

Guardian chimera, however, watch over more than freeholds and childlings. Within the Dreaming, guardians lead the way to faerie treasures, lost caverns, trods and even the silver path. For Storytellers who use the heroic journey model provided in **Changeling**, the guardian at the gate could be a chimerical creation, thus showing that the path ahead leaves the mortal world behind in more ways than the obvious. Guardians do not always guard with claw and tooth. Riddles, puzzles and games are methods that they can use to challenge those who attempt to pass them.

Antagonists

Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
— Lewis Carroll, "Jabberwocky"

Although frequently spoken of, my experience with changeling games is that chimera are rarely used as antago-nists, which is a shame because the possibility of conquering nightmares in a physical sense is nowhere as feasible as it is in **Changeling**. By extension, chimerical antagonists can aid players through nightmares, and even help the Storyteller overcome some of her own. Creatures from the Dreaming can be menaces to the changeling world and even in the world of the mortals, should the chimera possess the Wyrd Rede. Twisted Storytellers who run crossover games can create more ways for the chimera to attack humanity. Antagonist chimera need to be considered very carefully; while some could be "turned" to help characters, others remain malevolent because of their very nature.

Chimerical antagonists are found on all three levels: Monster, Flunky and Villain. Monstrous chimera are rarely sentient, although there are exceptions. They are created, as far as the Storyteller is concerned, to slow characters down with combat; they are not generally designed to be avoided or reasoned with. Of all the plot points where animate chimera are found as antagonists, this one is the most likely. Though, there should still be a story reason why the chimera is going to attack characters; perhaps there is a way around it without fighting, as the story dictates.

Chimerical flunkies are rarer and harder to define. They should be sentient, although they don't need to be too smart, and some of them may be reasoned with. Some chimerical flunkies are not fighters but spies, masquerading as non-sentient

(or even non-animate) chimera until they gather information and report back to their superior, whomever that might be. They serve the same purpose as any other villain's flunkies, but their motives are more complicated, especially if the villain is also a chimerical creature. Flunkies don't need a reason, beyond an order, to harass characters, but they do need one to serve the villain. Chimera don't always have the same motives for serving a villain that other characters do. Power, at least the temporal sort, and money are not strong motivators for creatures of the Dreaming — not usually.

Motive is the primary consideration for chimerical villains. Why would a creature of the Dreaming become a significant obstacle to an oathcircle of changelings? Once this question is answered, there is nothing to stop a chimera from being a full-fledged, story-driving villain. His goals and resources are different than those of an over-ambitious noble or a scheming constituent of the Shadow Court; a chimerical villain does have motives and resources, and almost all of them are chimerical. However, a sentient chimera with the Wyrd Rede could have mundane resources as well, and he probably confuses players, and their characters, to no end.

Creating Chimera

When creating chimera, you, as Storyteller, should keep many of the same aspects in mind as when building any other Storyteller character for a chronicle. The motives and personality of a character are as important for chimera as they are for changelings, mortals, or anyone or anything else that the Storyteller uses for adventures. The origins of a chimera, its motives and, for sentient chimera, its personality deserve a different approach.

Who created the chimera? Why? What does it look like? Why? Consider each question during the chimera's creation. Even for characters' chimerical companions, these questions need to be answered, although they don't need to be in any particular order.

The creator of the chimera is the being from whose dreams, or nightmares, the chimera sprang. Many chimera come from children's dreams, mortal and childling alike. But teenagers and adults still dream, and some of the most terrible nocturnae burgeon from troubled grumps' minds. While a character of a chimera's creator doesn't need to be hyper-detailed, a rough idea or sketch of the person whose dream birthed the chimera is helpful.

Why the chimera was created is a much more difficult question to answer, as it asks what touched the chimera's creator so deeply to spring forth a creature of dream. A chimera who is created to chase away a child's nightmare is quite different from the chimerical nightmare that it is driving away.

What form the chimera takes is basic to the personality of a sentient chimera. When they take the form of animals, those animals influence a characteristics of those chimera. Cats are aloof and excellent at being self-sufficient and mysterious; feline chimera share those specific characterics. Guardian chimera are more frequently canine. Loyal, friendly, devoted to their master, dogs are generally seen as excellent guardians. Certain animals have stereotypes and that can play into their creation as chimera.

Furthermore, a chimera's personality and motives should all be built on the chimera's origins. One who is created to guard a person or a place is a guardian. How sentient and how well it is treated determines how good a guardian the chimera is — but rest assured, it defends to the best of its ability. A chimera birthed from nightmares is menacing and easily classifies as a monster to be dealt with, fought and defeated. It doesn't have to be fought with blade and bow, since words or other means may suffice depending on the nightmare from which it burgeoned. For instance, a chimera birthed from a dream of hope is gentle and comforting.

When building a chimera's appearance and nature, don't be afraid to use ideas from contemporary culture or from mass media, as these images have an influence on the dreams and hopes of everyone, even if they do come from more banal sources. Also, not all creatures of nightmares need to be black with spindly legs and menacing jaws and claws. One particular comic strip had a demon discover that what his target was most afraid of was fuzzy pink bunnies. Silly, yes, but it proves that nightmares are relative. Young wilders and childlings may have creatures of nightmares that resemble Freddie and Jason from the movies, while others have nightmares of those resembling vampires or werewolves (and how do they handle dealing with the real thing?).

A chimera's motives are the most difficult to conjure up. Why they were created and the dreams from which they came are good places to begin. Yet, even less than changelings, chimera do not work by mortal rules or think by mortal standards. Chimerical motives are also a basic part of deciding what kind of chimera is being created. Guardians obviously guard, but why do companions travel with characters? Why are independent and other incidental chimera asking characters for help? Why are the antagonistic chimera going after characters, or people characters care about? As mentioned under Antagonists, temporal power and money are not high on a chimera's want list under most circumstances. An antagonistic chimera could be after characters because of wrongs, real or imagined, done in past incarnations, or for no reason that characters can fathom. The logic works only to the chimera in question; however, the Storyteller should be sure that the internal logic works. It may not make sense to anyone else, but it should make sense to the chimera.

Sample Chimera

These chimera are presented as examples. A few saw actual game-play, others were created long before there was

a **Changeling** game, or even the Storyteller system, and some were just fun ideas to write up. Redes marked with an asterisk (*) are new and serve as further examples of powers that chimera may have.

Yasmina

Yasmina is a gold and black tabby cat with wings to match. She's very cinematically Arabian, playing the Sphinx role as much as she can get away with, and she is very feline. One of her more unsettling abilities is the capacity to curse someone at a glance, or so she claims.

Yasmina is a companion chimera, suitable for working with any Arabic eshu.

Chimera Points: 36

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Glamour: 5

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Claw for 2 dice

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 5, Empathy 2, Flight 5

Redes: Curse*, Flight

Percival

Percival is a silver and emerald dragon about the size of a VW bug when curled up. He spouts an emerald-green flame, is versed in a flurry of languages, and likes black licorice and apple-flavored jellybeans. Percival was created by an extended oathcircle (actually three overlapping ones) to watch over a freehold. He doesn't like true mages and stares them down as much as he can. Even if they can't see him, they are aware of Percival watching.

This dragon is a powerful guardian chimera who can be found guarding the freehold of any noble — or freehold maintained by some powerful commoners.

Chimera Points: 85

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Glamour: 7

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -3, -5, -5

Attack: 8 dice bite, 10 dice claw, 5 dice Chimerical Flame

Abilities: Alertness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Flight 4, Intuition 2, Linguistics 5, Occult 3

Redes: Aggravated Damage, Armor (5 levels), Fire Breath (5 dice)*, Flight, Gulp, Traverse Dreaming, Wyrd

Zin

Zin is a three-foot-long, rainbow-hued snake that flies. He doesn't have wings, but that fact doesn't stop him from his flying. Zin is also a practical joker, and grumps, especially sidhe ones, are his favorite targets. Zin talks...a lot. He's quite useful as a scout but not as a spy, as he pulls pranks on those he's spying on, thereby letting them know something is awry. He tries to play innocent, but it never works. Pooka, especially childlings, love Zin's company; thus, he is an ideal companion chimera, although he could work just as well as an independent or as a low-level antagonist.

Chimera Points: 43

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 5, Stamina 1, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Glamour: 3

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK , -1, -2, -5

Attack: Not if he can help it

Abilities: Dodge 5, Pranks 5, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 4

Redes: Befuddle, Enchantment, Flight, Hide, Wyrd

Toshiro

Toshiro is an orange tabby cat, and a rather fat one. He has sparkling white wings and a single golden horn in the center of his forehead. The other item of note is the camera around his neck. Toshiro can use it, although no one knows how he gets the film developed — and he does so with irritating frequency. Conversely, Toshiro makes a handy combat distraction as the flashbulb goes off in the opponent's face. He has a thick Japanese accent as well. Think of a photographer on a cruiseship, or something similar. That's Toshiro.

He is an independent chimera. What dream he came from is anyone's guess. He could just as easily have come from a nightmare.

Chimera Points: 39

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Glamour: 5

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK , -1, -2, -5

Attack: 3 dice claws, 4 dice with horn

Abilities: Brawl 1, Dodge 5, Intimidation 2, Photography 5, Subterfuge 2

Redes: Flash*, Flight, Weaponry (horn), Wyrd

The Jabberwock

The Jabberwock is a great big, buck-toothed creature with tattered wings and sharp talons on all four limbs. The color is up for debate, but most agree it is a shade of green. And it may have a waistcoat.

The Jabberwock is as an example of an intermediate-level antagonist chimera, although it does not have to be used as

such. A changeling with an identification with Alice might have the Jabberwock guarding her.

Chimera Points: 45

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1, Perception 5, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Glamour: 4

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5, -5

Abilities: Athletics 5, Alertness 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 2

Attack: 11 dice bite, 13 dice claws

Redes: Armor (5 levels), Fear, Flight, Weaponry

Pandora

Pandora is another irritating cat, this time it is one of the Cheshire variety. Although she bears a strong resemblance to the one so lovingly drawn in Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*, the coloring is different — a mix of teal-green and aqua-blue — and she's more helpful than her cinematic counterpart. Pandora doesn't consider herself to be mad, but just a cat, and cats don't work by human rules. Just ask her.

Pandora is another independent chimera — and a strong one.

Chimera Points: 50

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Glamour: 8

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Claws for 2 dice

Abilities: Dodge 6, Faerie Lore 5, Greymayre 5, Literature 5

Redes: Enchantment, Hide, Sense Banality, Traverse Dreaming

Sparkly

A small glowing ball of green light, Sparkly is a non-sentient chimera. He doesn't speak, although he glows at different intensities and shoots out green-gold sparks. The changelings belief that this fountain of sparks occurs when he's upset, but no one is absolutely sure. They *do* know that those sparks can hurt.

Sparkly is a non-sentient independent chimera, although he could be a guardian chimera or a FUBAR (see **Kithbook: Nockers**) in a nocker's care as well.

Chimera Points: 22

Glamour: 6

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -5

Attack: 3 dice Chimerical Electricity

Redes: Dreamform, Flame Breath (3 Dice)*

New Redes

Curse —This Rede works much like the second level of the Soothsay Art (see **Changeling: The Dreaming** Second Edition, pg. 181). As long as the target is enchanted, she is vulnerable to this Rede. The chimera must possess the Wyrd Rede in order to affect targets neither fae nor enchanted. Each two points of Glamour invested by the chimera acts as a success for determining the effects of the Rede.

Chimera Cost: 5

Use Cost: 2/level of curse effect

Flame Breath — This Rede can be used to provide a chimera with a chimerical-ranged attack. The most obvious effect is dragon's breath, but arrows, laser beams and lightning bolts can all be created by it.

Chimera Cost: 3 per dice of chimerical damage

Use Cost: 1

Flash — Allows the chimera to blind a target. The target must be fae or enchanted, or the chimera must possess the Wyrd Rede as well. The target is blinded for 5 turns, but this effect can be soaked with a Dexterity + Dodge roll (difficulty 8) to avoid the flash.

Chimera Cost: 3

Use Cost: 1

The Others

The Kithain and the Dreaming are by no means the sole supernatural forces within the World of Darkness. Many other beings with their own factions and problems inhabit the twilight world away from the ken of humanity.

Changeling relations with these supernatural beings mostly deteriorated after the Shattering. Once Banality fell like a curtain over the land, the Kithain were more interested in surviving than playing politics with the dangerous and mercurial creatures sharing the shadows with them. There are notable exceptions, such as the fae/werewolf gatherings once every 10 summers in Hibernia (Ireland), the sheltering of Kithain in Paris by the vampire Prince Villon, and the great compact of fae and magi in Great Britain (detailed in **Isle of the Mighty**). Most other supernaturals, notably the vampires, lost contact with the Kithain after the Shattering. Memories of the fae became like the half-remembered dreams of blood-warm nights.

With the return of the sidhe, however, and the arrival of an Indian Summer (a burst of Glamour before the coming of Winter), many ancient pacts, treaties and protocols were reestablished. The sidhe renewed their contact with the mages, werewolves and other supernaturals, almost as if time had not passed between them. For the most part, many of these groups were shocked and surprised to have these living legends turn up after nearly 600 years.

Now that the Kithain are becoming more active, they are coming into further contact with other supernatural forces. The nobility has been the major impetus behind the reopening of these lines of communication with those who used to be allies. With the renewed contact, however, the Kithain have also begun to rediscover ancient foes.

Optional Rule: Enchanting Prodigals

All creatures with supernatural ability are referred to as Awakened beings. Some Storytellers may desire to make it easier for changelings to enchant Awakened beings, thus allowing for a chronicle that involves several varieties of supernaturals. When using this rule, a changeling may attempt to enchant any Awakened being within sight. To attempt an enchantment using this method, the player must spend at least one point of Glamour and make a Glamour roll (difficulty equal to the target's Banality rating). This enchantment lasts for one day (24 hours) per point of Glamour spent but is modified as per the chart below (so the Garou could be enchanted for three days per Glamour point, and so on). Those Awakened not listed on the chart are affected for one day.

Awakened Being	Modifier
Garou	x3
Mage, Marauder	x5
Mage, Nephandus	x3
(also includes Virtual Adepts)	
Mage, Tradition	x2
Vampire, Kiasyd	x5
Vampire, Malkavian	x3

Politics

When dealing with the Prodigals, Kithain generally prefer to call upon the Wyrd so as to appear more impressive. It is much more advantageous for the local duke to negotiate with the Toreador prince as an exquisitely gorgeous creature wearing sublimely crafted ceremonial armor than as a 16-year-old high school student in hightops and a T-shirt. (Of course, the sidhe might find that he now has to worry about a vampire who decides she must have this beautiful creature, but that's another matter entirely.) Similarly, when trying to prove one's valor in combat, better to be an eight-foot-tall troll facing off against that Crinos-form werewolf than a junior varsity halfback.

As the fae, most notably the sidhe, slip back more noticeably into the supernatural goings-on in the World of Darkness, they reaffirm their ancient alliances. For example, the sidhe have long had a pact with the Silver Fang werewolves, as well as the mages known as the Order of Hermes. Other kith, houses and factions have their own allies among the Prodigals as well. The Shadow Court has friends in high places within the Sabbat. House Fiona's kinain and the Fianna Kinfolk have intermarried extensively as well.

Since the Resurgence, the Kithain have also rediscovered old enemies. The werewolves who call themselves the Get of Fenris have an ancient blood feud with the sidhe, and will slay them on sight. The Ravnos vampires also come into conflict

with the Kithain regularly. The Kithain's oldest and dangerous enemy is as yet only rumored to be active. Although rumors of new sightings of the creatures called fomorians are still just that, it is certain that something matching the description of the enemies of the fae still exists. There are those who whisper that House Balor may know, but for now House Balor prefers to keep its own counsel on the matter.

While the Kithain know much about their wayward cousins, much of their information is often out of date, coming from sages and lore that existed before the Shattering. The nobility, for example, knows the names and general traits of the clans of vampires from the 13th century, but the more recent bloodlines and politics are completely new to them. A sidhe might remember that a Ventrue should be received with the same dignity as a visiting noble, but would be much less likely to know how to receive a Daughter of Cacophony. This lack of experience with the current states of supernatural politics often makes it difficult for the nobility to deal with those creatures. Many commoners, notably the sluagh, have more of an idea about the lay of the land right now. It causes much amusement when the duke makes a *faux pas* in the presence of the local mages by asking where the Ahl-i-Batin are.

Current Events

There are three major Kithain/Prodigal events in the recent past worth mentioning. The first was the destruction of Duke Rococo's summer court by a horde of vicious misshapen werewolves. The massacre prompted High King David to put the Red Branch on high alert for signs of these twisted creatures. The Fianna bard Niall Whitestar claimed that these are the Garou's ancestral enemies, and offered his pack's help. In response, to the shock of the conservative elements at court, the High King made Niall and his pack provisional Red Branch Knights, charged with bringing those responsible for the massacre to justice.

Another recent episode saw a cabal of mages called Cultists of Ecstasy take over a freehold built inside a rambling Victorian house, held by a roving trago of satyrs. When the satyrs returned to find their home co-opted, they girded themselves for battle and entered. Since then, no one has seen either the mages or the satyrs. Occasionally laughter is heard emanating from within, but no one who has gone inside to investigate has returned.

Finally among wilders, it is becoming the height of chic to undertake a quest to hang out with the Prodigals and return in one piece, or better yet, tweak their noses in some witty way. More than one changeling has found herself in hot water when a simple "Get in and out of the Chantry" dare turned into a serious challenge of sorcerous skill when the local magi decided that they weren't thrilled with an uninvited visitor.

Vampires

Known to the Kithain as the Children of Lilith, vampires are said to be descended from a redcap who slew his brother.

Others claim that there is a grain of truth to this story, but that this being was of a separate kith altogether, and that the entire kith was punished by the Tuatha de Danann as a consequence of this one faerie's actions. Yet others believe that these lost fae simply became so enamored with their bloodlust that they lost sight of their true fae nature.

All vampires claim they are descended from this murderer, known as Caine. The Kindred, as they call themselves, are embroiled in a neverending struggle for power, dominance and supremacy known as the Jyhad. Kithain can sometimes be swept up in this grand tapestry of manipulation, usually with disastrous results.

These blood-drinkers are often riddled with Banality, and therefore are shunned by the majority of fae. Still, the Kindred's style and dark desire can be potent lures for potential Glamour. Many sidhe find the elders of the Children of Lilith fascinating, for they often hold keys to their past existence on this plane. There have been many stories of elder vampires who recognized one of the returned sidhe, sometimes as an enemy or as an ally from centuries long past.

Some Kithain are drawn to the Kindred like moths to a flame. There are those who view the politics of the undead as the greatest challenge of all. Others yearn for their lost immortality, and see the vampiric existence as the closest equivalent. Yet others simply buy into the belief that vampires are somehow cooler than anyone else.

Kithain are aware that vampire society is divided among family and ideological lines, but most don't bother to learn more than which sect controls their area and how safe it is to wander at night. High King David's court has issued a warning to avoid the group of vampires known as the Tremere, due to the fact that several Kithain have been captured by these vampires and destroyed during experimentation.

Most Kindred have no idea the fae exist. Those who do know tend to view fae as extremely powerful but also very childish.

Ravnos

The clan that poses the most danger to the Kithain, and can have the most effect on the Dreaming, is Ravnos, although the majority of these Gypsy vampires are completely unaware of the danger they pose to fae. These Kindred have a power called Chimerstry, which to the mundane eye is illusion. The Kithain recognize it, however, as the power to create chimera. An illusion created by one of these vampires (whether animate or inanimate) is considered to be a chimera, albeit one that is not controlled by its maker. Weapons and creatures created using this power can cause chimerical damage to Kithain and the enchanted.

It is said that the Ravnos were taught their powers by an eshu who was beaten in a talecraft contest by the founder of Clan Ravnos. As a prize, the eshu granted the vampire the ability to perceive the Dreaming. Through this knowledge, the founder discovered a means by which he could manipulate the Dreaming in ways not even understood by the fae. Though he was able to pass along the ability to craft illusions with the stuff of the Dreaming, the innate sight of the magical world was lost to future generations.

Malkavians

The madness and peculiar insights of the Malkavians brings them closer to the Dreaming than any of the Kindred. The Kithain find them the easiest to deal with because of their low Banality. This clan of vampires has the closest ties to the fae, with treaties and compacts going back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Many Malkavians recognize Kithain as being fae, even though they cannot perceive the Kithain's fae mien or chimera unless enchanted. This is not always a good thing; the derangements of some Malkavians are not conducive to pleasant relations

Malkavians are drawn to fae like moths to a flame, and the attraction is occasionally mutual. It is not uncommon for a Malkavian to drop by a local freehold, and hang out quietly to watch the show or even be bold enough to socialize. Most of the residents aren't certain if the Kindred are always aware that they are in a freehold, and it's possible the Malkavians themselves don't know.

Malkavians have less chance of a bad reaction to drinking fae blood, and in fact drinking it can make them a bit more lucid than usual. The danger lies in the fact that some Malkavians get addicted to fae blood after only a few tastes. A Malkavian addicted to fae blood can prove to be a very dangerous predator.

Some Kithain (especially Unseelie) choose the high-risk, high-reward position as a Malkavian prankster's muse. These Kithain inspire the mad vampires' tendency to cruel and elaborate pranking, and reap the rewards in the Glamour produced.

The difficulty of all Reverie rolls involving Malkavians are reduced by one.

Finally, one of the least known facts about Malkavians (and they prefer to keep it that way) is that they are completely unaffected by the Mists. Though they must still be enchanted to be able to see a changeling's fae mien and to interact with chimera, they remember absolutely everything once the enchantment wears off.

Kiasyd

Perhaps the most closely related clan to the Kithain is the Kiasyd (see **The Storytellers Guide to the Sabbat**). These enigmatic vampires come from a strange magical experiment fusing together the blood of Kithain (notably sidhe and eshu) and a group of vampires called the Lasombra. These experiments were carried out with the full knowledge and cooperation of the Shadow Court, and some older members still shake their heads and hope some use can be found for these odd vampires.

Kiasyd keep to themselves as a rule, but once in a blue moon one can be found at a sluagh tea, sharing tales and esoteric knowledge. Although they can perceive the Dreaming and Kithain quite easily, Kiasyd wisely stay out of fae business.

Kiasyd have a Discipline called Mytherceria, which allows them to perceive and affect the Dreaming. Level one, Fey Sight, automatically allows the user to see the chimerical world, including the fae mien of a changeling and active chimera. A

Kiasyd using this power is considered to be enchanted for the purposes of being affected by chimera and cantrips. (The vampire must be actively using the power; just "having" it isn't enough.)

Crossover Ideas

Although apart from isolated groups, Kithain don't have much contact with vampires. However, there are a few reasons why the two would interact. The Shadow Court maintains ties with the Sabbat, and Unseelie Kithain and Thallain occasionally hang about local Sabbat packs. The Sabbat enjoy having redcaps around to dispose of the remains of their wild "parties." It is also considered a mark of bravery among many fae to walk with the vampires for a night and survive.

Another idea for crossover stories might revolve around an old pact made between the fae and an elder vampire; as the pact comes due, he sends his childe (who knows very little of the fae) to fulfill his obligation. Alternatively, Kithain and Kindred exist in the same cities, and may cross paths at an art museum that happens to be an Elysium or a coffeehouse that is a gathering spot for local fae. What happens when a Toreador shows an unhealthy interest in a changeling's Dreamer, or becomes enamored of a sidhe? What if a local Gangrel begins spending her nights near a local glen?

Vampires and fae move in different circles, but cold arms may seek to embrace the bright flame of a changeling in the

hope of salvation. A tragic romance between a Kithain and a vampire could be an epic chronicle lasting many stories.

Finally, a fae-blood-addicted vampire is one of the deadliest predators a local fief can have. If one is discovered, it means an immediate call to arms. Hunting the ultimate urban shark is dangerous at best and foolhardy at worst.

Crossover Rules

Chimerstry

The Discipline of Chimerstry (see **Vampire Players Guide**) creates illusions that can be perceived by mortals and all Awakened beings. However, these illusions are spawned in the Dreaming and become all the more real to the Kithain.

All illusions created by Chimerstry have chimerical reflections as well. These chimera often remain in existence long after the original illusion has faded. For every success earned in creating an illusion with Chimerstry, the chimera will remain for at least an additional day. How this chimera acts depends upon the nature of the illusion that was cast. Inanimate chimera generally remain in the area where they were created, and can be interacted with by changelings just like any other inanimate chimera. These are almost always considered to be Incidental chimera (see **Changeling: The Dreaming** Second Edition, pg. 218). Animate chimera can take on a life of their own, often with extremely unpredictable effects.

A Kithain can sense the use of Chimerstry within a mile with a simple Kenning roll (difficulty 7). One success gives the Kithain a general idea of where the Discipline is being used, while five successes allows the Kithain to pinpoint the exact location.

Obfuscate

A sluagh can pierce the vampiric Discipline Obfuscate by rolling Perception + Alertness (difficulty 7) This perception works on any level of the Discipline.

Auspex

Any Kindred using Auspex 2 (Aura Perception) can perceive a changeling's aura as a flickering pattern of lights and colors. This adds two to the difficulty of attempting to read a changeling's aura. Additionally, an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 8) allows the vampire to recognize the changeling for what she is.

Drinking Changeling Blood

Fae blood acts as a potent hallucinogen to any Kindred drinking it. Some jaded Kindred have come to consider it a delicacy, while others avoid it at all costs. There are also those who seek it for its supposed magical powers. Some whisper it can be used as a component in certain Tremere blood rituals.

The effects of drinking fae blood on Kindred are variable. Storytellers are encouraged to make up their own effects, such as power surges, hair growing out of embarrassing places, or perhaps oversized ears. As a general rule, however, as soon as the vampire ingests the blood, the player must make a Courage roll (difficulty 3 + the number of Blood Points ingested). If

there are no successes, the vampire enters the second threshold of Bedlam (see **Changeling: The Dreaming** Second Edition pg. 208) A botch causes the vampire to enter the equivalent of third-stage Bedlam as well as gaining a permanent Derangement (Storyteller's choice).

The Embrace

Changelings often don't survive the trauma of being Embraced — their faerie souls are usually snuffed out by the experience. Anytime a changeling is Embraced, the player must make a Glamour roll (difficulty equal to the vampire's Banality + 2). Only one success is needed to survive the transformation. If no successes are gained, then the character's faerie soul is forever destroyed and the character dies. Storytellers may wish to reduce this difficulty for changelings embraced by less banal vampires, particularly Kiasyd and Malkvaians.

Assuming he survives, any Kithain unlucky enough to be Embraced is immediately claimed by the Mists. He reverts entirely to his mortal seeming and loses all access to (as well as memory of) his Arts and Birthrights. The fae soul within the new Kindred is in permanent stasis, and must wait until the Kindred suffers Final Death before reincarnating. Some changeling scholars believe that a faerie soul who suffers such a trauma never returns to this world.

A Kithain-turned-vampire who is enchanted regains his memories of his fae life for the duration of the enchantment, though as soon as the enchantment wears off, the Mists quickly claim these memories again. An Embraced changeling who is enchanted does not regain access to any of his former abilities (Arts, Birthrights, etc.); he simply remembers what he used to be, and what he has lost in exchange for immortality.

Outlooks

Vampires? No, I don't hang around them. I hear they live forever, and that's about all I know. You could ask the sluagh, they might know with them. Me, if I ever saw one, I'd walk the other way mighty quick. Why? Well, I'm just not too keen on something that thinks I would make a good snack.

— Gareth Toadstool, boggan restaurant owner

The Kindred are the greatest game of all. It is tempting to immerse oneself in their Jyhad, and with it, them. However playing with that fire will get one burned. I have shared tales with them on occasion, and have seen mad vampiric revels by moonlight. Since an altercation in a dark alley one night with a thirsty vampire, however, my path has steered decidedly clear of them.

— Draeven Softfoot, eshu wanderer

Don't know much about them, and that's all right by me. Yeah, we've run into these Nosferatu in our mines, but we don't bother them and they don't bother us. They're nasty old bastards who'd nip off you just to find out how you taste. All together now, kids — hell, no!

— Irving Claybourne, nocker mechanic

Malkavians stink. Never touch the stuff. Once, I was cruising the main, and there was this tragic figure in black, looking wan and Gothic… uh, except for the clown makeup. So, I hung out with this kid for a bit, and apart from a predilection for a little AB positive

once in a while, it was very cool to watch her pull pranks that would make my grump-pa jealous. Vampires? Nah, don't bother.

— Runcible Shaw, pooka philosopher

Some claim that they're family. Whether it's true or not, those bloodsuckers called the Sabbat seem more like us than the namby-pamby elves. Here's my recommendation — hang out, match 'em pint for pint, and make sure you aren't on the buffet when the dinner-bell rings.

— Derek, redcap gang member

Imagine the knowledge they must have locked away… centuries of experiences and immortality to boot. Now that's what I call living!

— Phillipe le Noir, satyr entertainer

Of all the Prodigals, only their grace and beauty comes near to matching our own. Many of our kind are drawn to their dark mystique like moths to the flame. Unfortunately, those drawn in by the their dark light often suffer the same fate as the moth….

— Adrienne Forst, House Eiluned

I have a Nosferatu to tea every second Thursday. He is courteous, quiet, and shows me a respect I find lacking in many Kithain. As far as I am concerned, these so-called Leeches are more tolerant and civilized than most so-called nobles I know.

— anonymous sluagh of Duke Dray's court

My feelings on these creatures are divided. I have spoken with a sad soul despairing of its nocturnal existence and unfettered craving. I have also seen a mad beast tear into the flesh of the living before I could strike its head off its shoulders. Protect their victims, and show compassion to those who seek release from their existence. To those who revel in their killing, show no mercy.

— Graeme Thornshield, troll warrior

Werewolves

Of all the Prodigals, the werewolves have the closest relations with the fae. The Kithain show these ancient allies respect by referring to them as Garou, the name they have for themselves. Before the Sundering, the fae and the Garou shared their homes, glens and places of power. As the fae began withdrawing from the world, their relations changed, some becoming strained, some breaking entirely. Others, like the ties between the Kithain and the Fianna tribe, grew even stronger as they presented a united front against common enemies such as the fomorians.

Most Kithain see werewolves as wild cousins who sometimes let their tempers get the better of them. There are those who say that the Garou split away from the fae when their dreams of vengeance and rage overpowered them. Still, the Garou are valued allies to many fae, and many Kithain will go out of their way to help a Garou in trouble. The Garou for the most part recognize these ties, and not a few werewolves have served as enchanted bodyguards or muscle for a Kithain court.

The different tribes of Garou have varying degrees of contact with each kith. There is one tribe who avoids contact with any fae save trolls, and have to be restrained from killing sidhe on sight. These are the Garou who call themselves the Get of Fenris. The Get swore a blood oath against the sidhe a thousand years ago in answer to an ancient humiliation, and the oath stands to the present day.

The greatest Garou allies of the Kithain are the Fianna. These Celtic Garou have ties of fealty and blood to all the noble houses of the fae, as well as many of the commoner kith. A Fianna elder lives at the court of the Kingdom of Apples, acting as Queen Mab's advisor on Prodigal affairs.

Kithain and Garou are also bound by what some perceive to be a common enemy. The Garou are frequently embroiled in battle with a group of vicious misshapen mutants called fomori. It doesn't take most Kithain long to make the leap of logic that these beings may be their ancient fomorian enemies taken form in the modern world.

The Garou claim that they are fighting a massive spirit of destruction known as the Wyrm. The Crystal Circle sage Malthus has stated he has proof that the Wyrm is the ancient dream of evil known only as the Dark. His critics say his evidence is circumstantial at best, and that the Dark was defeated eons ago. Regardless, the nobility have decreed that if possible, fomori activity should be observed and reported on.

The Shadow Court has werewolf companions of their own. The twisted, leprous lupines known as Black Spiral Dancers have been known to occasionally enter into agreements with factions of the Shadow Court, performing services such as assassinations in exchange for fae treasures and magical aid.

The Wendigo and Uktena are much closer to the Nunnehi Nations than to European fae. This native alliance has caused more than a little friction between the Uktena and Wendigo and Fianna. Some Garou of these tribes have been known to become involved in Kithain politics, as if their own internecine problems weren't enough.

House Balor is rumored to have mysterious ties with both the aforementioned fomori and the Black Spirals. This is not considered common knowledge, and House Balor boasts of secrets gained from their dark allies they say even the sluagh don't know. The sluagh, on the other hand, merely smile and raise a sardonic eyebrow when the Balor start talking.

The most likely place to find fae and Garou living together is a glen. Such a natural source of Glamour often makes a good place for a Garou spiritual site, known as a caern. When a new glen opens, Garou, changelings and mages race to be the first one to claim it. Often this race can degenerate into a squabble. Taking the tempers of the Garou into account, fisticuffs can also break out. Sometimes, though, the fae and Garou share the glen, the Garou tending the landscape while the fae tend the local Dreaming.

Fianna

The greatest allies the Kithain have among the Garou are the Fianna. Bred primarily from Hibernian stock, the Fianna's network of Kinfolk is so intertwined with changeling blood that it has been known, though exceedingly rare, for Garou and Kithain (or at least kinain) children to be born of the same parents.

The Fianna know more about fae society than any other Prodigals, with perhaps the exception of some mages. Fianna bards are often welcomed into fae freeholds, and Kithain are often in attendance at Fianna moots. This closeness of kin and attitudes have led some Kithain scholars to believe that the Fianna were the last Prodigals to leave the fold of fae to join the Garou.

It is often the Fianna who protect visiting sidhe from the rage of the Get of Fenris, an act which does not endear the Celtic wolves to their Nordic cousins. Fianna often speak as Kithain representatives in negotiations, and advise nobles on the state of the Garou Nation within their boundaries.

During the Accordance War, the Fianna were split on whom to support. They had been dealing with the commoners for centuries, and those ties of loyalties were strong. However, the old compacts with the sidhe made it hard to openly help the burgess. In the end, apart from a few skirmishes, they avoided getting involved in what was felt to be a purely internal fae matter. As a result, the commoners no longer are as friendly with them as they might have been in the past. The sidhe, however, gladly welcome their ancient allies back into the fold.

Recently, High King David made a pack of Fianna into provisional Red Branch Knights, and this has caused quite a stir in conservative circles. This Prodigal Red Branch pack has been give the task of rooting out any fae-Wyrm collusion, and has some powerful faerie treasures to aid it. It is a measure of how close the Fianna are to the Kithain that they were accorded this honor.

Get of Fenris

Tthere are probably no other Prodigals who harbor such hatred for the Kithain, especially the sidhe. These arrogant Nordic Garou have a blood oath sworn to destroy any sidhe on sight, and seriously maim anyone found in association with them. The Fianna, naturally, dislike such attitude, and their defense of their fae allies and cousins has enraged the Get. Pooka can't resist pranking people so unrelentingly grim and driven; the Get find that it takes a lot of pooka pelts for a good cape.

The reason behind the Get's hatred of the sidhe harkens from long before the Shattering. A group of sidhe in the northlands lost their horses (how this happened has been lost in the telling) and were in need of alternate mounts. One day, a young noble of a forgotten house happened upon a troll discussing the craft of war with a large half-man half-wolf. The sidhe watched in amazement as the creature shifted into a huge wolf and loped off into the forest, followed by the troll.

The sidhe decided that these large wolves would make the perfect mounts for the snowy country, if they were properly ensorcelled. He gathered up his host, and they traveled to the place where this werewolf resided with his pack. Using strange magics, they subdued the great warriors, and placed them under *geasa* to remain faithful and obedient pets for one millennium.

With the coming of the Shattering, the sidhe abandoned their "pets" and left Earth for Arcadia. The descendants of their tribemates found them, and when the tale of their thousand-year bondage was told, the entire tribe swore a blood oath of revenge. Since then, the Get have been unfriendly at best to the fae, and homicidal to the sidhe in particular.

Trolls and Nunnehi have been spared from this oath, and many Get of Fenris hold trolls in high regard for their honor and fighting ability. For their part, the trolls feel torn between ties of loyalty to the sidhe, and their sense of shame at their leaders' actions. The Nordic Garou can occasionally be found talking about "the Old Country" with the trolls, and engaging in games/fights of strength.

Nunnehi and the Native Tribes

The two tribes of Garou native to the continent of North America, the Uktena and the Wendigo, are closely allied with the Nunnehi Nations. It is not unknown for Nunnehi and Garou who share the same totem to run in the same pack together. Between them, they work to preserve the old ways and the lands. They share far more in common than not.

The Nunnehi are the only fae, besides the trolls, spared from the oath of the Get of Fenris. The often-supremacist Get

Fomori and Fomorians

Garou often speak of the corrupted humans called fomori that they battle at every turn. The similarity between these creatures and Balor One-Eye's children is too striking to discount. Kithain who have had encounters with these beings, and who have sufficient Gremayre or Remembrance, are convinced that these are the fomorians of old, brought into the modern world and more dangerous than ever.

Currently the nobility is divided on the question of the fomori. Many prefer to ignore the evidence, pointing out that the fomorians were creatures of the Dreaming, and these are closer to Prodigals than to fae. Besides, the Garou are dealing with the problem. Others think that the Kithain should be mobilized against this threat.

When asked about the matter, members of House Balor have assured the other Kithain that these fomori are a threat only to Prodigals, and are certain that they are not the ancient enemy. After all, it is Balor's duty to watch for signs of stirring from the Dark.

The Kin

The Fianna, like all the tribes of Garou, have an extensive pool of related humans known as Kinfolk, usually from the same stock as the tribe. Some know of their heritage as part Garou, and some don't. Some Kithain had particular bloodlines of mortals with which they tended to mix, producing a higher ratio of Kithain and kinain than usual. The combination of these two heritages in one family produces a family occasionally referred to as the Kin.

Only three families bear this mixed blood, and they have become exceedingly rare in these times. Two come from Irish/ Celtic stock, and the third is from the Brittany region of France. Whereas one out of 10 children is Garou in most Kinfolk families, Kin families are blessed with three out of 10 births becoming Garou. Of the other seven, the magic in the blood is so strong that chances are between one and three will be Kithain, and the rest may have kinain powers.

The Garou and Kithain coming from these Kin clans maintain close relations, and it is not unusual for them to call on each other for aid and protection, their ties of blood making them a tightly knit community of two disparate supernatural cultures.

are hardly tolerant of the Native American fae, but they have shown a strange reluctance to engage the Nunnehi. Some observers believe this is due to the protection of the Uktena and Wendigo, but a sluagh has made smirking references to a Get pack being soundly trounced during a fight against a band of Nunnehi. Conversely, the Fianna tend to treat Nunnehi changelings as somewhat savage, yet honorable fae, following the examples of the European fae. This condescending attitude makes most Nunnehi fume, and tends to irritate their Garou allies as well.

Crossover Ideas

Kithain and Garou can often be found together; Kithain are often in need of stalwart companions for adventuring, and Garou fit the bill very well. Many Garou would feel honored to join in a long arduous quest that promises adventure and renown for both parties. The Garou often hold wild revels called moots, to which the characters could be invited as guests. Ancient obligations could require a motley to render aid to a pack of Garou whose ancestors had oaths sworn to them.

Kithain hearing of fomorian activity might approach Garou to learn more about them, or even to gain allies. A motley could attract the attention of a Get of Fenris pack or Black Spiral Dancers, forcing them to seek out allies in other tribes.

A tribe of Garou could claim the characters' glen or freehold as a caern, forcing them to choose between going

to war with these nine-foot-tall killing-machines, giving up their freehold or trying to negotiate some sort of agreement.

Kithain with Fianna or other tribal allies could find themselves involved in the constant intertribal squabbling that makes up Garou society. Even if they choose to stay out of the arguments, they may find themselves involved simply by association.

Crossover Rules

Gifts

Werewolves have magical powers called Gifts, which are taught to them by spirits. Many of these abilities can also affect the Dreaming. These Gifts are generally tuned to the world of spirit in which a Garou lives, but can overlap with the Dreaming. The following are Gifts detailed in **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** that affect changelings and chimera.

Spirit Ward (Level Four Homid Gift)

This ward extends into the Dreaming and is also proof against any kind of chimera.

Sense the Unnatural (Level Two Lupus Gift)

If this Gift is used to detect changelings, the difficulty is 9, unless the Kithain is actively using an Art, in which case the difficulty is 7.

Name the Spirit (Level Three Lupus Gift)

If this Gift is used while the Garou is enchanted, the Garou can identify chimera. This only works if the chimera is a recognizable or distinct creature or entity.

Pulse of the Invisible (Level Three Theurge Gift)

This Gift allows a Garou to perceive creatures of the Dreaming (this includes a changeling's fae mien), though he must first know what to look for. Generally a Garou who has never been enchanted will not be able to perceive chimera with this Gift, unless he was taught by one of the Kithain or another Garou who has seen chimera. A Garou actively using this Gift to perceive creatures of the Dreaming is subject to attack by chimerical means and is affected by cantrips as if he were enchanted.

Spirit Drain (Level Four Theurge Gift)

This Gift works on chimera that the Garou can perceive. Many Kithain take the destruction of benign chimera as an attack on the Dreaming.

The Malleable Spirit (Level Five Theurge Gift)

This Gift can be used to affect chimera if the Garou is enchanted (or using Pulse of the Invisible, above).

Spirit Friend
(Level Three Children of Gaia Gift)

This Gift allows the Garou to perceive creatures of the Dreaming and interact with chimera. Most benign and neutral chimera will act friendly to the Garou. Antagonistic chimera (such as nervosa) are not affected by this Gift.

Faerie Kin (Level Three Fianna Gift)

When this Gift is used, any changeling within a one-mile radius feels a mental pull and knows that a Garou is in danger. Even if he has never encountered a Garou, he feels a nagging sense that *someone* is in danger. The changeling may make an opposed Willpower roll (difficulty 8) to avoid the summons. Failure means that he must respond to the call for aid by the quickest means possible. If the Garou botches, however, she summons the nastiest Unseelie in the area, especially any nearby Thallain.

Changeling-Garou

Kithain souls inhabiting a human or Kinfolk body preclude the possibility of the First Change. In effect, the changeling's fae soul blocks the mystic connection to Gaia that all Garou souls share. Hence, even within a body that has the Garou gene, the changeling cannot become a Garou. Any changelings who are also Kinfolk do not suffer from the Delirium, even when wholly in their mortal seeming.

The Delirium

Changelings who are actively in their fae mien are not affected by the Delirium.

Outlooks

I rather like that nice Walks-With-Wind fella. He dropped by the freehold last night, and played some pretty tunes on that pipe he has. I've heard tell that his folk can have nasty tempers. Well, he's never shown it to me. As far as I'm concerned, the Garou are always welcome at my fire.

— Thom Whittlewood, boggan craftsman

When you walk, I can think of no better companions than those called Silent Striders. I welcome them upon my journeys with open hand and heart. A word of warning, though — anger not the Garou. Once roused, their fury and power is enough to rend stone from its moorings.

— Maria, eshu talespinner

Figgerfurbing furballs're ok by me. This Glass Walker guy, name o' Franchise, and me have an arrangement. I keep his car running, he picks up odds and ends for me. Apparently they're fighting some kind of war, but hey, so long as it doesn't interrupt business….

— Irving Claybourne, nocker mechanic

Oh, the whole werewolf thing? Apart from the Fianna, I don't believe in 'em. However, I know this big doggie who lets me pet him when I slip him a burger. Kinda fun to have around when they aren't

bravely going forth to hurl themselves into the maw of something-or-other. Oh, yeah, and the coyote-Garou, the New-wash-a — well, when we get together, woo-hoo!

— Runcible Shaw, pooka at large

Bloody whirls of death is what they are! When they get into it, they can make one of our parties look like a church supper.

— Jason, redcap wilder

I once spent a week with a pack that resides just outside the city. They taught me songs of battle, I taught them…. other things. We faced down and killed some… thing. I don't know what it was, but it wasn't a chimera, and it nearly ripped one of my arms out of the socket.

Brave, feral, beautiful. That's the Garou.

— Jesibelle Acturus, satyr musician

The noble shifters have been our allies since time immemorial. We hold them in highest esteem and honor. It's a shame about the Get, but perhaps that was… a mistake. I welcome them to my court and to my home.

— Duke Dray, House Gwydion

Bone Gnawers? No, I have never met one of those. Why do you ask? I have met other Garou, and I have learned much about them, but I'm not telling you.

—Hettie One-Eye, sluagh grump

I have fought beside Garou in the moonlight. Their fierce ways of honor and duty are similar to ours. I hold any I meet in high regard. They are stalwart companions and powerful allies. Their war is our war, and only the shortsighted cannot see it.

— Duke Topaz, troll of House Gwydion

Mages

Ages ago, the fae first met humans who could speak words that formed new Dreams. The power of these mortal Dreamers frightened many fae, but also fascinated them, and in spite of themselves, they return again and again to walk with them.

These willworkers of reality are a diverse group, and the Kithain as a whole have contact with only a few branches. It is with mages, more than any other supernatural group, that the different kith have separate relations.

During the Sundering, but before the Shattering, many fae held themselves aloof from the human magick workers. The prevailing attitude was that these humans were simply dabblers, unable to truly touch the Dreaming. When the Shattering came and Glamour fled, the commoner Kithain sought any sign of magic in the world. Many of them came upon mages, also struggling to restore magic to the world. Many Kithain worked with the mages, and the attitudes of the past were quickly wiped away. Kithain and mage stood together against encroaching Banality and other supernatural foes. Some even pooled their resources, sharing the mystical energies of freeholds. (A stand against the sorcerous Tremere vampires by a mage/changeling compact is detailed in **Isle of the Mighty**.)

Problems arose when a group of mages dedicated to a paradigm of science and reason triumphed, imposing their static view of the world on everyone. With belief in magic dying, magical power also faded. Mages began to seek out sources of power, including freeholds. The mages would drain them of Glamour in order to add to their own personal meager stores of magic. At first, some Kithain felt that it was important to support their allies, and allowed the draining of some smaller freeholds. The mages became greedy, however, and began seeking out larger freeholds.

This large-scale Ravaging precipitated the time of the greatest changeling and mage conflict. The era commonly called the Industrial Revolution had just begun. The mages, feeling that their doom was nigh, marshaled as many occult forces as they could. This gathering of resources included taking Glamour from the last few shared freeholds. The Kithain at this time, already fighting for their own existence, fought back against the willworkers. Throughout the world, alliances were broken, freeholds drained, and enchanted mages sent into madness (which they refer to as Quiet). The greatest battle raged in the city of Boston, where a motley of trolls cornered the remnants of an Order of Hermes Chantry. With spell-breaking artifacts clenched in their horny fists, they advanced. When the smoke had cleared, one troll remained standing, and the rest of the participants had vanished. Word of this conflict spread, and the mages learned quickly that they were no longer welcome in Kithain holdings.

The 20th century has seen a rapprochement between the Tradition mages and the Kithain. With the renewal of some ancient sources of Glamour, the fae are slightly less paranoid, but they still keep the locations of freeholds secret from all but their most trusted mage allies.

When the Resurgence occurred, the sidhe were given a crash course in mage proficiency. Duke Aeon challenged a member of the Order of Hermes to a duel, and His Grace was soundly trounced. As a result of skirmishes like this, the sidhe have become very interested in making alliances with mages, but are quite wary of the power they possess.

Perhaps the greatest threat to the fae are the mages referred to as the Hidden Ones, ideological descendants of the first merchants of Banality. It is their master plan to crush the wonder and magic from the world in the name of "protecting" the masses, leaving it a cold gray world of antiseptic science. Any who know of the fae have spared no expense or effort to force them into slumber. Some groups of these magi have advocated death by cold iron as the solution to the "changeling question." The Kithain avoid these banal mages whenever possible, but if cornered by one, their only hope is to throw all their Glamour at the willworker in the hope of enchanting the mage long enough to escape. It is a shared hatred of the Hidden Ones, or Technocrats as the mystic mages refer to them, that often brings Kithain and mages together.

The Traditions

The nine mystical Traditions of mages are the willworkers who battle the Hidden Ones' secret agenda of Banality. Some of these Traditions accept the fae within their views of reality and have traffic with them. Others are almost as banal as the Hidden Ones themselves. The following three Traditions have the most contact with the Kithain.

Verbena

The Verbena, patterned after the old pagan ways, use nature and blood magic to affect reality. These mystics probably have the most contact with the Kithain, due to the fact that the fae are part of their paradigm. Often the Verbena render aid in exchange for changeling blood (which can be used in several rituals and spells) or other favors.

Order of Hermes

These formal, "high magic" mages had the most contact with the sidhe before the Shattering. Now that the nobility has returned, the Hermetic mages are beside themselves with joy at this sign of returning magic. It is said one ancient mage actually giggled and clapped his hands like a child upon hearing the news that the sidhe had returned. Hermetic mages can be found in consultation with Kithain sages, or acting as unofficial advisors to the nobility.

Dreamspeakers

These shaman-mages interact with spirits and magical creatures on an almost daily basis. As a result, the Kithain find these mages to be among the least banal. The Dreamspeakers have many contacts with the Nunnehi and other native faeries, and occasionally the European fae. Dreamspeakers are the most likely to seek out the fae to learn their secrets. Many Kithain, having been burned by mages in the past, are wary of these mystics' overtures of friendship.

Crossover Ideas

The most common reason for mages and changelings to interact would be to move against the Hidden Ones. Many nobles lend support to local mages who are fighting the Hidden Ones. Mages and changeling also work together when they have a common goal, such as searching for a powerful artifact.

Mages occasionally find their way into the Dreaming. Generally, most believe it to be part of the Umbra. Many get lost, unable to perceive the Silver Path, and need Kithain guides to help them back to more stable areas.

Mages and Kithain come into conflict over the power of freeholds. Mages perceive freeholds as storehouses of magickal energy, which they term Quintessence. Unscrupulous mages who discover a freehold may drain it of its

The Nephandus Connection

Nephandi are those mages who have sold their souls to dark forces in exchange for magickal might. Many times they can be found in conference with the Shadow Court. Even the most hardened Unseelie tend to repress a shudder when dealing with these mages; the depths of depravity to which the Nephandi sink regularly (having no soul to lose can be liberating that way) have taught a few Shadow courtiers some new tricks. The lure of such powerful allies is a difficult siren song to resist, though.

House Ailil is said to have an ancient link to these evil mages. It is certainly true that members of this house can tell when a Nephandus is in the immediate vicinity (within a hundred yards). Whenever a Nephandus is within one hundred yards of a changeling of House Ailil, that character's player may make a Perception + Kenning roll (difficulty 8) to detect the Nephandus' presence. Whether this shows a taint in Ailil's breast, or is just a vestigial effect from a long-ago agreement, is unclear.

Glamour, sometimes extinguishing it permanently. This practice is abhorrent to the Kithain, and a Reaving mage may find himself hunted by a host of angry fae when they discover their home destroyed.

When the mad mages known as Marauders appear, they can disrupt the Dreaming as well as the mundane world, and changelings may help local mages to corral and neutralize the threat. However, there are a few Marauders that the fae would prefer to help… especially those who see changelings as being more real than humans.

Crossover Rules

Mages affect reality, changing it to fit their vision. The Near Dreaming often reflects this change. When a mage changes reality, using subtle or obvious effects, the Dreaming may be affected as well. A successful Kenning roll (difficulty 8 for vulgar magick, 9 for coincidental — see **Mage: The Ascension**) allows a Kithain to know that a mage used True Magick in the vicinity (within 10 yards). Three or more successes may determine what kind of magick was used, and five or more may allow some gleaning of who performed the magick (i.e., what Tradition or Convention, and perhaps who it was, if it is a mage known to the Kithain.)

Marauders, insane mages existing in their own reality, twist and warp the Dreaming in their wake. Where Marauders pass, the Dreaming recoils and reforms in grotesque shapes, reflecting the mad ones' views of reality. Strange chimerical creatures and artifacts are spawned, and go on rampages of their own. A changeling may enter the Dreaming to discover that his marble palace has become a twisted gnarled tree house

with grasping branches and gaping maw mouth, thanks to the passing of a Marauder.

Extensive use of Dream Craft (see **Nobles: The Shining Host** or **Dreams and Nightmares**) can repair the damage caused by a Marauder's passage. Alternatively, the Kithain can seek out artifacts or chimera capable of reversing the effects. This might be a good seed for a story involving mages and changelings.

Resisting Enchantment

The will and sense of reality of mages is stronger than that of most people. Therefore, when a changeling is attempting to enchant a mage, the mage may be able to resist the effect of the enchantment. To do so requires a Willpower roll for the mage (difficulty 8). The mage must score one success for each point of Glamour that the changeling invested in the enchantment attempt.

Countermagick

Kithain magic and True Magick flow fundamentally from the same source. As such, mages can attempt to resist the power of a Kithain's cantrips. The flipside of this is that a Kithain can use her Glamour to counter a mage's power as well. Doing this removes a bit of magic from the world, and risks giving the changeling more Banality.

When a Kithain performs a cantrip that will affect a mage, the mage can use her Arete to counter the cantrip. The system for this is to roll the mage's Arete with the difficulty equal to the highest level of Art being used in the cantrip + 3. This is the formula regardless of whether the mage is using countermagick, unweaving or anti-magick.

To resist mage magick, a changeling player must roll her Glamour against a difficulty of the highest Sphere rating used in the effect + 4. If successful in countering the effect, the changeling receives a point of temporary Banality for having removed some small bit of magic from the world.

Magickally Draining Freeholds

Some unscrupulous mages worm their way into a Kithain motley or court to gain access to a freehold. Others may just stumble onto one. Either way, the mage may decide to siphon the Glamour from the area, seeing the freehold as a magickal Node. Fortunately for changelings, it is highly unlikely that most mages will find a freehold by accident. The wild nature of Glamour seems to cloak it from sight, even to the mystical senses of mages.

To locate a freehold, a mage must first actively examine an area and must use both Spirit 1 and Prime 1 on the location he thinks may be a freehold. He then must succeed in an Arete roll (difficulty 9). A failure indicates that the mage fails to notice the freehold and sees only the seeming of the place. If he succeeds, he sees a brief glimpse of the freehold's true nature.

To drain the freehold of its Glamour, the mage must have Prime 3 or higher. The amount of Quintessence gleaned

without destroying the freehold is equal to its level. If the mage decides, he may drain double the points of Glamour, extinguishing the balefire within the freehold. Any points taken over the level of the freehold may damage the freehold at the Storyteller's discretion.

Some courts allow allied mages to siphon Glamour from the local freeholds, but this is exceedingly rare.

Any changeling witnessing a mage draining a freehold will retaliate in kind against what any Kithain considers a heinous act. Some mages attempt to drain Glamour surreptitiously from a freehold while purporting to be allies to the fae. These mages walk a fine line, for if their treachery is revealed they will certainly reap the whirlwind.

Spirit Sphere

The sphere of magick dealing with Spirit is closest to the Dreaming, touching it in places. Mages who are proficient in this sphere can use it to perceive and affect the Dreaming.

Any mage with one dot in Spirit can attempt to discover if someone is Kithain by rolling his Arete (difficulty 7). To perceive the local Near Dreaming, the mage must roll Arete (difficulty 8). If the mage wants to scan an area for a Kithain presence, again, an Arete roll is called for (difficulty 9).

Changeling-Magi

Changelings cannot use True Magick, because the fae soul inhabiting the changeling's body has forced the human's Avatar into permanent slumber, making it impossible for it to Awaken.

Awareness

A mage who has encountered the fae in the past may sense their presence with an Awareness roll (difficulty 9).

Outlooks

Wizards? Never met one. I hear their Arts are pretty wild, but I'm just as happy not having to deal with another complication in my life. Now move your feet, I have to sweep here.

— Gareth Toadstool, boggan restaurant owner

Once I sat with a Dreamspeaker at his fire. He called the spirits, and we shared stories of the first dawn. The Dreamspeakers and Verbena have been our allies for centuries. I respect them, but always keep in mind the mistakes of the past.

— Maria, eshu talespinner

Sons of Ether — heh! Weird science! These guys are like mad scientists — they have the coolest gadgets, and their journals are a hoot! The one I've met, he's a riot. A little cracked, yeah, but ain't we all? I'd never let one of 'em touch my car, though.

— Irving Claybourne, nocker mechanic

Once, I was chatting with a mage. He was all decked out in white robes, long gnarled staff, thick white beard. It was cool. Uh, then he tried to eat me. So, generally, I don't hang out with them. Oh, and steer waaaay clear of the ones in suits!

— Runcible Shaw, carrot eater

Don't know a whole lot about 'em to be honest. They bleed just like anyone else, though!

— Derek, redcap gang member

Mages. Heh, three words — Cult. Of. Ecstasy. I never thought anyone could out-party me, but these guys managed it. Come to think of it, if it wasn't for the fact that I didn't seem to lose any Glamour, I would've sworn they Ravaged me. Doesn't matter, though. It was worth it.

— Phillipe le Noir, satyr entertainer

The magi have honed their skills since we left. They are powerful and inscrutable. In our absence they took much Glamour from our freeholds, and that makes me leery of trusting them. They fight the Hidden Ones, and in that I will aid them, but I am still cautious of allowing them into my home.

— Queen Mab, House Fiona

I like the Euthanatos. The death-mages have a sense of style (besides scaring the willies out of the sidhe). Many mages have extensive libraries, and that makes them allies and contacts worth having. Don't forget about the betrayals of the past, though.

— Heather, sluagh Goth

The mages are a force for magic in the world. In that we support them. The mages hunger for power. In that we oppose them. Some have more honor than others do. I would trust many of those in the Verbena, Dreamspeaker and Akashic Traditions. The other Traditions I see as sometimes useful, yet untrustworthy companions.

— Duke Topaz, troll of House Gwydion

Wraiths

The Kithain have the least contact with the spirits of the deceased referred to as the Restless Dead. For many reasons, most changelings shun wraiths. It's one thing to talk to a vampire, a werewolf or a wizard, but ghosts are often another matter entirely with the fae.

Many sidhe are terrified of anything relating to death. They see wraiths as uncomfortable reminders that humans may continue past death, but no one knows what happens when a sidhe dies. Many commoners are superstitious and remember the old stories about ghostly visitations, often seeing them as bad luck.

Childlings are divided. Ghost stories told at sleepovers with the flashlight are fun; real ghosts are not. Some see wraiths as cool, if incorporeal, friends. As changelings advance in years, some begin to lose their earlier ease around wraiths, and "Casper" suddenly becomes an extra from *Frighteners*. A wraith may befriend a childling, only to lose that friend as the childling grows up and finds it really disturbing that his otherworldly friend can make the walls drip blood. Some wraith fall into such despair over the loss that they decide to make their former friends' lives hell with ghostly pranking (which is often frightfully malicious).

The Restless Dead are in a constant struggle to resolve the ties that bind them to the twilight zone between the world of

the living, and the great Beyond. It is searching for a way to preserve these chains, or Fetters (see **Wraith: The Oblivion**), that makes a wraith seek out living allies who can help them finish their business. To make matters worse, wraiths must also deal with the threat of their darker sides taking over and wreaking havoc. This Shadow, as it is called, can manifest at inopportune times, and many changelings often do not know when or why their wraithly acquaintance's personality changes at the drop of a hat.

Sluagh have the greatest contact with the Restless Dead. They can see and interact with wraiths more easily than virtually any other supernatural creature on Earth. This ability is believed to date back to an agreement between the spirits of the dead and the sluagh. It is said that there was once a man by the name of Glam, who was kinain to the sluagh, although only his soft-spoken voice pointed to it. One day, Glam was walking the ramparts of his city when a hue and cry was raised from the gate. Glam rushed down, and was told a shambling creature approached the city, the stench of death heavy upon it. Glam strapped on his silver buckler and heavy sword, then ran to meet this creature. When he came upon it, he stopped in his tracks. It had the shape of a man, yet was white as a sheet. Upon its head was a grievous wound that must have been fatal. Glam was prepared to fight the undead creature, but it spoke to him words of peace, explaining that it was a spirit of the dead, returned to its body and risen from the grave to avenge its murder.

Glam listened to the creature and stayed his hand. He felt compassion for the dead man, and instead of attacking, swore to aid him in the bringing justice against the murderer.

Glam and the dead man traveled to the village where the murderer, a common footpad, lived. There they found him playing dice and drinking. When the thief saw the man he had left for dead approach, he died of fright in the middle of his games. Glam, disappointed that there would be no fight, asked the dead man if there wwas anything else he could do.

The dead man answered that he had fulfilled his task, but many spirits of the dead needed help in fulfilling theirs. Many of them needed a pair of hands in the waking world, and Glam and his kin would do his kind a great service if they would aid these spirits. Glam agreed.

Before the dead man sank into the Beyond, he cast a spell upon Glam. The spell affected all who shared Glam's blood, and allowed them to see and speak with the spirits of the dead who remained bound to the Earth. It was this gift Glam passed to his sluagh kin, and this is why they can see the dead to this day.

The wraiths who tend to cross paths with the Kithain most are usually members of the wraithly Guilds known as Sandmen, a few of those called Chanteurs, and to a lesser extent, those called Haunters. The Sandmen enter the dreams of the living and bring them into the realms of the dead, using the power of dreams to create illusions and effects. Chanteurs' powers are focused through their ghostly songs, which has caused many a changeling to believe they are banshees. The Haunters are ghosts who harass the living, using their power to affect the living world.

Sandmen

The Kithain have many stories that speak of the dead stealing the dreams of the living. Many of these stories may be based upon the actions of the Sandmen. These wraiths use a ghostly power called Phantasm (see **Wraith: The Oblivion**) to affect the dreams of the sleeping. This power has a definite effect upon changelings who are, after all, creatures of dreams. If a Sandman is patronizing a Kithain's Dreamer, the difficulty for all rolls for Reverie or Ravaging is increased by three. This effect does not dampen the Dreamer's creativity (unless the wraith is scaring the mortal into not creating for some reason). It simply makes the dreams where Glamour is formed less accessible. Three successes on a Kenning roll (difficulty 8) allows the changeling to realize that something is tampering with the Dreamer's dreams. A successful Gremayre or the proper Lore roll (difficulty 7) allows the character to know that the intruder is a wraith.

The Kithain must then decide how to deal with the situation, assuming he doesn't simply abandon the Dreamer. The safest means of dealing with the problem is generally to acquire the services of a sluagh who can communicate with the wraith. A much more dangerous proposition is for the changeling to attempt to draw the Sandman into his own dreams for a more equal footing.

Crossover Ideas

The Kithain, with the exception of the sluagh, tend to shun the Restless Dead. Most stories involving changeling-wraith interaction concern a wraith who had ties to a changeling before her death. The other most common means by which a changeling may come into contact with a wraith is if a Sandman is marauding one of his Dreamers.

Crossover Rules

Slaugh Perceptions

In order to see a wraith, a sluagh must make a Perception + Kenning roll (difficulty 9). To hear a wraith, the character must spend a point of Glamour.

Keening

Keening is the wraith power to create emotions within a target. Changelings are affected by this power more easily than most. Any Keening roll made against a changeling has its difficulty reduced by one. A changeling and a wraith can

work in unison to enhance the creation of Glamour from a Dreamer. For ever two successes rolled by a wraith using Keening, the difficulty for Reverie or Ravaging is reduced by one.

Pandemonium

The effects of this wraithly power often extend into the Near Dreaming. The chimerical effects created by the use of this power can be quite disturbing, not to mention dangerous, to any Kithain in the vicinity.

Outlooks

(Gulp) G-ghost? Nope, never seen one and hope I never do. Ask a sluagh. I have, uh, somewhere else to be.

— Gareth Toadstool, boggan restaurant owner

The Restless Dead seek a way to leave their lives behind. Many simply need a helping hand, and it behooves us to aid those who ask politely.

— Maria, eshu talespinner

Ghosts, wraiths, spooks, whatever the momzers are called, I don't care. I ain't never seen one, and I probably never will. I hear they're all over the sluagh like flies on shite though.

— Irving Claybourne, nocker mechanic

Ooooh…. White sheet over the head and lots of bemoaning their deadness. Booo-ring. There are a few who enjoy a good prank, and they ain't so bad. On the other hand they also taste like strawberries.

— Runcible Shaw, lover of strawberries

One thing's for sure, ya can't bite 'em.

— Gort, redcap childling

Clammy hands rising from the grave to steal our dreams? (shudder) No, no — wraiths freak me out.

— Phillipe le Noir, satyr entertainer

I'd rather not discuss it. They're manifestations beyond our understanding. No one knows what is beyond death. No, I'd really rather not discuss it.

— Baron Edgewick, sidhe scholar

The arrangements between ourselves and the wraiths are not matters for public discussion — you do understand, of course? I have found few ways more satisfying and easy to get rid of unwanted company by simply striking up a conversation with the ghost who's sitting just behind his shoulder.

— Elspeth Danvers, sluagh keeper of antiquities

The Restless Dead chill even my bones. I tend to stay away from them. Some, however, are warriors who need to settle debts of honor. These spirits I would aid.

— Graeme Thornshield, troll warrior

CHAPTER FIVE: OTHER PLACES, OTHER DREAMS

The crazy landscapes behind the faces,
Holding back the forbidden places
Abolished music, lost for ages
The living words of forbidden pages
Though dust has gathered on honest feeling
Forbidden truths through twilight stealing
And in the eyes of the listless faces
Glisten hints of forbidden places.
— Meatpuppets, "Forbidden Places"

City life, so they say, is quicksilver. It's a good place for a **Changeling** chronicle, as it provides players and Storytellers with a familiar environment that helps offset the bizarreness of the game's fantastical elements. After all, most players have probably never had to wait for a herd of Imperial Clockwork Unicorns to saunter out of their way, but it's a safe bet that most of them know all about the frustration of being caught in a traffic jam. A Storyteller uses these comparisons to build familiar points of reference so players have something with which to orient themselves as they become acquainted with the strangeness and charm of the Dreaming.

City life is quicksilver — but quicksilver handled for too long becomes tarnished, dull, and ultimately it kills like a bullet through the brain. The city might be where most of us start out, but for changelings, that cradle doesn't have to be a prison. There are whole other worlds out there, waiting to be found by those with the courage and imagination to seek them. There are other places, other dreams.

Locales

The only limit to finding new and different settings for your **Changeling** game is the limit of your own imagination. In other words, there are no limits! Daydream for a while; let your subconscious bubble up with creativity and then filter through your goals for the game. Think for a while about who characters will be, how they get there, how they'll meet up and work together, and what they're going to wind up doing. Paint the setting as vividly as you can — if you can make the backdrop come alive, the dream becomes deeper.

Rural

No back streets, no neon, no nightclubs. No action? No way. Away from the hammering pulse of the city, the pace of life relaxes, true, but just because time ambles along here doesn't mean that nothing ever happens. As every changeling knows, things look perfectly ordinary on the outside, but underneath, ah, underneath.... Traditions and customs

long-vanished elsewhere are an ordinary part of life here. History is not a dust-clogged tome of unread pages, but a living force shaping the present and the future. The dreams of the countryside are older, deeper, darker — closer to the primal heart of the forest than those of the city. For newcomers, rural life can be as different and strange as anything found in the depths of the Dreaming.

The key to making good use of this setting is to successfully convey these differences. The sights, sounds, and smells of the country are not those of the city. Air pollution barely exists. Instead of clogging up the lungs with a miasma of rubbish, exhaust fumes and the stink of sweating humanity, characters breathe in the perfumes of nature (and not all of them are as pleasant as freshly mown grass). Think how the rural community you're devising supports itself, and then work out how this translates into the smells that coat characters' nostrils.

Is it a farming community? Describe the stink of animal sweat, the woody odor of their bedding and food, and the pungency of their dung. Townies are often reduced to gasps and tears; locals suck in hearty lungfuls and proclaim it the ultimate cure-all. During harvest time, the rich smell of turned soil and of damp cut grass hang heavily in the air, and through the Autumn, smoke is commonplace as the remaining stubble is burnt off in the fields.

For a community that survives by fishing and farming, the most persistent smell is that of the sea — a promise of permanence and motion. Though it's omnipresent in the background, it becomes stronger at some times of the year than others, depending on the quantities of seaweed (which usually ends up rotting on the shoreline) and the local marine fauna. Near port, the pungency of tar and oil try to smother it. And, of course, on top of it all is the overwhelming fish stink that insinuates itself into everything and becomes practically impossible to get rid of. So, anyone who works regularly with fish or near a place where others do so are immediately identifiable by the odor around them.

The difference between the ambient sounds of the city and of the countryside is not surprising. A city is never silent. Even in the quietest times, even in the most exclusive districts, there is always the droning hum of traffic. Not so in the country. Naturally, traffic is rarer and is only punctuation in the great slow sentences of silence. The scuttling of small animals foraging, the trills of birdsong, the calls of domesticated beasts, the yips and squeals of predator and prey — all these combine in a true pastoral symphony. Even the absence of sound can be notable — in some places, especially at night, it's possible to actually *hear* silence. Although comforting for people born and raised in the country, it can be an oppressive experience for city folk, likened to being cast adrift and abandoned in an escape-proof tank.

Thanks to the neon glare of signs and streetlights, only the brightest stars can be seen, and even then, their glory is reduced. But darkness reigns — true darkness, real darkness, the soft velvet curtain that drapes itself over the land — and the full majesty of the night sky is revealed.

Regardless of whether your rural setting is a sleepy backwoods Maine town or a fishing village on the coast of Scotland, it should explore the way that locals deal with each other and with outsiders.

Everyone Knows Everyone Else — Or At Least, They Think They Do

Rural communities are small. There's no slums, no homeless, no hordes of nameless strangers. Not only does everyone know your face, but they know your name, your family history, and probably a lot of embarrassing information that you'd rather they didn't. In a city, people can go missing and not be noticed as such for a while; in the country, people wonder right away if Old McSpoot isn't out walking Gripper at half-past six, like he's done every day for the last 20 years. In the city, people move in and don't attract much attention; however, they become the focus of interest in the country. A lot of interest. When you do something, people are going to know about it. And they talk about it. And if it's not juicy enough — well, it will be by the time the story's been told the first 15 times.

Gossip is a powerful tool. Much of the time, it's the social glue that binds communities together, keeping people in touch with the comings and goings of its members. But on occasion, it can be a deadly and unpleasant weapon that has driven many over the brink of despair. City changelings might be acquainted with whispering campaigns as a tool of courtly politics, but in rural areas, gossip is paramount. Other aspects of politicking are greatly reduced, as many have found to their cost. Of all the Kithain, boggans understand this best (though sluagh and eshu, with their love of tales, come a close second) and tend to have much influence in these rural communities.

Therefore, country chronicles deprive the Storyteller of a staple of World of Darkness stories, namely, the Faceless Victim. Most commonly, he is the old tramp the vampire drains dry and discards when the Storyteller can't be bothered to play out a hunt scene, or he is the innocent shopper the redcap Ravages when a quick 'n' dirty fix of Glamour is required, or he is a nameless writer desperately battering out words to assuage the great god D'edlyn. Although **Changeling** goes some way toward lessening this problem with its detailed systems for gaining Glamour, there is still the temptation to let it happen in the background while the group concentrates on something "more relevant." This is not an option in a rural chronicle; since everyone is known, any oddity in behavior — a disappearance, a surge or dip in creativity — is picked up on immediately and discussed behind closed doors and turned backs. You can use this to show characters the consequences of their actions and to add a new level of emotional depth to the story, helping make characters feel that they are an integral and dynamic part of a greater backdrop that alters and adapts to their actions.

And, of course, the deceptive power of gossip makes it easy (should you be so inclined) for the wrong people to hear about the deeds of a careless changeling....

It Runs in the Family

Most small communities have one or two families whose fingers are firmly stuck in every pie, and they are usually fiddling around with the ingredients, too. Landowners, farm hands, carpenters, electricians, pub landlords, fishermen — an extended, close-knit net of brothers, sisters, husbands, cousins, aunts and uncles cast all around town. The target of much gossip, they have sway in community affairs and are fiercely loyal to one another. The nature of which depends on their reputations: "Those damn Carmichaels! Thick as thieves, the lot of them — did you know young Caradoc was up for assault? Well, they all swore blind he'd never set foot in the Creel that night. Even though my Dougie saw him going in there with that big knife in his belt!" As opposed to: "Ah, the young Carmichael's a rogue all right. Always in trouble, poor lad — I hear they're trying to pin the trouble up at the Lobster Creel on him! Aye looking for a scapegoat, so they are — and this is only because he's a Carmichael. They should get to solving some proper crimes and leave kids alone."

Family members are quite prepared to lie, cheat, or steal to look out for their own, and although it's acceptable to quarrel in private, they always present a united front in public. It's not a good idea to get on one's bad side since, like a wasp nest, it won't be long before all of them get involved. And then life can get very difficult.

This situation becomes bizarre for changelings if one is a member of a prominent family. If the changeling is a lowly member of court but high in the esteem of one of these families, then his peers may treat him with a high degree of respect, not wishing to incur the enmity of his relatives. Perhaps the changeling enjoys a position at court based on his mortal heritage rather than on merit or experience, which can be a motivating factor in stories if characters attempt to maneuver someone who is better suited into the position, or (and more interestingly) if a character is the undeserving party.

Another approach is to decide that such a situation alters the traditional changeling power structure and to adopt something unique to the locale — for example, a Mafia-like changeling "family," whose members and their chosen are the true wielders of power, or a courtly structure in which nobility is spurred by blood ties to a family rather than membership in a house.

Memory Has a Very Long Reach

Gossip ensures that events of the dim and distant past — events that would quickly vanished into obscurity anywhere else — are kept very much in mind. A friend of mine, a twenty-seven-year-old with a successful consulting job and two children, will always be known as "the wee boy who fell down the drain." This memory stretches back generations to the times of grandparents, great-grandparents and further. In this way, the oldest folklore proliferates in the minds of the present generation.

Characters are held accountable for deeds perpetrated by their ancestors, whether those deeds are noble or foul, and they find themselves preceded by the reputation they bestow. It can take momentous effort on characters' parts to be taken for who they *are*, rather than who they are descended from.

What if the character is the reborn form of her descendant? Will she choose to wallow in past fame (or infamy), even if she no longer truly deserves it? Such questions are the focus of contemplative stories that examine character's ethics, while raising discussions about the choices the fae have made as a whole.

Life for changelings in the countryside is as strange as it is for the kinain. Typically, there may be only one large freehold rather than many small ones, and traditional court life plays poor second fiddle to blatant subtleties of gossip. Boggan, eshu, and sluagh should feel at home with this factor, while trolls may be disturbed by the whispering campaigns that sit oddly with the stolid, practical nature of country folk. The sidhe find the roughness of it all distasteful — if tolerable at all. The commoners have made the countryside their own. The memory of the nobility's panicked race escaping the world as Arcadia's gates closed at the time of the Shattering survives in bitter tales. And yet, time has healed wounds of the past, and stories of the sidhe's beauty and nobility remain, handed down through the generations like torches of hope. The commoners may be only too glad to hand power back to their rightful masters. Sadly, they are frequently rewarded by unthinking exploitation.

When planning stories and chronicles set in the countryside, consider these factors: Are characters locals or newcomers? If they're locals, then detail what they know about each other and their families — keep the above laws in mind. If they're newcomers, how do they assimilate into the foreign environment, and how do the locals adjust to them? In chronicles in which the characters are new to the rural surroundings, take the opportunity to play out stories of quiet strangeness and expose the differences gradually as characters see beneath the surface calm. *Northern Exposure* and *Twin Peaks* illustrate this example, for they often blur the boundary between the real and unreal becoming too intrusive or out of place.

Exotic

Changeling is firmly rooted in the Western mythic tradition. It's rich enough and accessible to satisfy the most demanding troupe. It's not the only option, though. The dreams of other cultures are a treasure trove of stories and myths that beg to be worked into your game.

The eshu, the only kith derived from a tradition other than Western, is an excellent way to get characters "out of the old and into the new" (sometimes, more "into the new" than characters have a desire to be). Played as a mentor for a character, an eshu makes a good bridge between the exotic new culture and the familiar ways of home. Give players something to hold onto at first; just flinging them into the thick of happenings and watching them sink or swim (or, more likely, drown) might provide amusement, but players become frustrated — and frustrated players provide an awful gaming experience. So, this bridging figure lets you compare and contrast the old with the new, highlighting the alien aspects rather than just countering them with players (and their characters).

Of course, you mustn't have your mentor or Storyteller character perpetually on hand to make things easier for players — give them sufficient information so they feel comfortable, then snatch their handy resource away. They should know enough not to be overwhelmed by the foreign environment, but everything is going to get much, much harder....

This situation could become the genesis of a story arc, or chronicle, as characters try to work out what has happened, how to cope with the locals, and how to get their mentor back.

Stories can come from shockwaves produced by the proverbial crash of two cultures meeting head-on. As well as indulging in comic possibilities, serious issues can be explored (or, best of all, serious points can be made by having fun). How will a comfort-loving, stay-at-home boggan react to being dragged on a wild-goose, or unicorn, chase by some itinerant teller of half-truths? What happens to an out-of-control satyr in an Islamic culture? Would a female submit to being covered in figure-obliterating robes that *purdah* demands? Can a troll appreciate and accept other cultures' concepts of honor and loyalty, no matter how radically they differ from his own?

Letting players create characters native to other cultures is difficult, but rewarding. Much more is demanded of everyone in the troupe, as the burden of research falls on everyone, not just the Storyteller. Shifting into the mind-set of a Moroccan peasant is tricky, but if you can transpose yourself into the paradigm of an eight-foot-tall guard dog with horns and a temper, it's not going to be impossible. Creating the right atmosphere in the gaming area by using posters, postcards, incense, music and sound effects helps a great deal in evoking setting. Thus it is more conducive to accomplish the required mental gymnastics. Again, having someone in the troupe who has direct experience with — or at least, an interest in — the chosen setting is a considerable help.

As with the rural locales described before, the key to using an exotic location is to show players what makes the setting different from the normal environs of your game and to stress those differences. It's all too easy to tell the same old stories against a variant backdrop — avoid this tendency at all costs. Failure to take advantage of the cultural differences lessens the culture and the game. After all, unless you do something different, what's the point?

Research is crucial, although remember that you are striving to evoke a feel and to conjure up a sense of time and place. While accuracy is an important element in underpinning this effect, it isn't the focus. Myth and legend grow from, and are inspired by, reality — rather than being straitjacketed by it. Feel is everything; the folklore and fairy stories of other cultures are more useful than a cupboard of Fodor's guides. However, just because this game is based on *faerie* stories, you're not going to skim through a few books IN BIG TYPE with lots of pictures and then become magically endowed with the ability to construct brilliant, enjoyable games. Oh no. Myths and legends are rooted in their cultures, and **Changeling** is rooted not only in myth, but in contemporary culture — and in the synthesis of the two.

During research and preparation, consider how the legends you've discovered fit into today's society and how they've adapted to this modern age, as the fae adapted to Banality and discovered the Changeling Way. For instance, because of the animistic component of Shintoism, you decide that the preponderance of Inanimae in the country is much higher than elsewhere and that Banality is reduced for Inanimae or changeling magic or interactions involving them. The shape and mannerisms taken by the Inanimae can be based on ancient folklore or on the modern dreams of the manga comics.

A chronicle set in Australia, meanwhile, might incorporate the Dreamtime mythos of the Aborigine peoples; given that Dream Tracks — the remaining traces on land that show the routes that the Ancestral Beings once walked — are of great importance. Trods might assume greater significance and become capable of a much wider range of effects than their more Western counterparts. If the Dream Tracks are walked to the correct Dreaming sites, and the correct ceremonies are performed, you might allow characters to regain an appropriate amount of Glamour. Equally, Inanimae might be more powerful than normal at Dreaming sites, where certain rocks, trees, or other natural features are places where the Ancestral Beings sleep in the earth. And if they can be appeased, they might become a source of guidance or sanctuary for characters.

You don't need to go globe-trotting to find strange and unusual flavor games. Put down the book, get out of the house, take a walk around town. Anywhere can be an exotic setting if you look at it with a fresh perspective.

The Dreaming

Stop.

Put the book down on the floor. Cross your eyes, stand on your head, and keep reading. This is the best way to get the feel of running a chronicle in the Dreaming. Games in the Dreaming turn one of the fundamental tenets of **Changeling** upside-down. No longer do characters have to worry about the gnawing erosion of their Glamour by the onslaught of Banality. Instead, they must strive to hold on to their mortal essences, lest the madness of Glamour sends them shrieking into Bedlam.

The Dreaming is as dangerous and difficult a place for changelings as the mundane world. The nature of the danger may be different here, but it is a real danger (though more insidious than Banality since it plays on the changeling's faerie nature). It's easy to spot the signs of Banality in oneself, but the early signs of Bedlam blur the distinctions between chimerical and mundane reality — a distinction that is tenuous for many changelings. And, if a character prefers to remain in the Dreaming, where chimerical reality already holds sway....

The fact that the realm's changelings are taught to regard the Dreaming as their spiritual home is as full of danger as the mundane reality that imprisons them. The world where they were born gradually erodes their faerie nature until only a dim husk of mortality remains; their ancient homelands

drive them mad. Changelings have no home, no place that is wholly theirs. They are part of neither one thing nor the other, and they must walk alone on the path that meanders through the valley between the two. Changelings are like children standing in the rain with their faces pressed against the cold glass of a toy-shop window. They are able to see the bright treasures sparkling within, yet they know with a dull certainty that they will never be allowed inside.

However, this aspect doesn't mean your chronicle should degenerate into a histrionic series of vampire-esque angst fests, in which each player strives to outdo the others in displays of wailing, teeth-gnashing and chest-beating. The mood of quiet tragedy and the ache of loss and longing should infuse the game and give it a nobility and a poignancy. To induce the mood successfully, don't force it down players' collective throat, and they will realize it by themselves. And the impact will be immeasurably greater.

Chronicles set in the Dreaming are suited to more fantastical stories than their mundane counterparts. The Dreaming is a vivid, realer-than-real place with the vibrancy of an animated cartoon. This correlation shouldn't imply that the Dreaming is a purely comic or insultingly simplistic environment, but that they have qualities in common: boldness in color, clarity of definition, and a tendency to exaggerate and emphasize the characteristics of its inhabitants. Beautiful things become more beautiful, ugly things become uglier — there is no middle ground, no blandness. You can use this effect to subtly satirize the real world (and even real life), especially in the distorting mirror of the Near Dreaming.

Chimera tend to play a larger part in stories since the Dreaming is the cauldron of imagination in which they boil. It is here also that those chimera that attain sentience and self-awareness flee to escape Banality and find a place to carry out their own agendas. Such chimera can be used as major antagonists in a story (a scuttling host of gigantic spider-things infesting the woods near a freehold, for example). Villains such as these carry an inherent pathos with them, for they are like changelings' creatures of dreams, truer Kin to them than most of humanity. In a way, characters are struggling against their own kind.

As one travels further into the Dreaming, logic and common sense erode until, in the shifting psychoscapes of the Far and Deep Dreaming, they break down entirely. If stories take characters here, don't indulge in pointless surrealism for the sake of it (unless you're deliberately trying to bore or irritate). Use the nature of the Dreaming to explore characters' personal themes in a subtle and unforced way. Since it is the realm of dreams and nightmares, and changelings are creatures of dream and inspiration, the Dreaming reflects their true nature the further in they go. Chimera (symbolical, but concrete representations of inner states) are frequently birthed around the changelings in response to thoughts, actions, hopes or fears. Ultimately, these hopes, fears and deeds exercise a real and physical change in the surroundings and in the actor herself, until the changeling is remade in the image of her most real self. No one can hide from who she is in the mirror of the Dreaming — a mirror that does not distort but shows the truth that other mirrors do not.

This concept of externalization can be at your chronicle's core. Reworking the Fisher-King myth is a good example. The kingdom's freeholds have become strange and terrible places; monstrous chimera rampage the land unchecked; the people grow violent as the nobility retreat to private chambers to brood. The characters soon discover the reason for the kingdom's decline: The king has succumbed to Bedlam, vanishing into the heart of the Dreaming. His madness has infected the realm, shaping it into a terrible model of his own shattered self. To restore the kingdom, the king must be healed and characters must restore him by encountering and defeating (not necessarily through force of arms) his inner demons, those of the kingdom — and their own.

Or perhaps the characters are themselves creatures of Bedlam and are living in a freehold deep in the Dreaming from which access to mundane reality is possible only at certain times. It is their self-appointed mission, whether from misguided altruism or from a darker motive, to bring some bright-eyed wonder of the fae back to a world that rejected it long ago. Their lives are even more delicate and dangerous than those of normal changelings, for they must be careful to let just enough Banality scar them. If not, nothing stops them from sliding into the unthinking irrationality of Bedlam's final threshold. A cruel Storyteller trick to pull at the end of this chronicle is to read a concluding monologue in the style of a psychologist's case notes, recommending that characters be committed forever as their problems appear incurable. Let players wonder if any of it actually happened. Were they really playing lunatics after all...? Note that the author bears no responsibility for injuries inflicted by disgruntled players.

When running Dreaming chronicles, resist the temptation to reduce the fount of all creativity to a sub-Disney Technicolor playground of animate toys and gingerbread towns. There's an incident in C.S. Lewis' *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* in which the heroes encounter a ragged man who tells them, in a voice shaken by fear, that they are about to enter the realm where dreams come true. Unable to understand his terror, they delightedly speculate about the wonders to come until the man shrieks out that it is not their *daydreams* that come true here, but their *dreams*. And all at once, the heroes' mirth fades as they remember, really remember, things that have stalked their slumber — the things that cannot be controlled.

The Dreaming is a marvelous place. But not all marvels are wholly pleasant, nor are they mawkish or sentimental. And chronicles shouldn't be, either.

Just Plain Odd

Here's that curious section in which we round up all those strange ideas that occur in the small hours when all decent people ought to be sleeping, but **Changeling** players are up and gaming. Exotic ideas more exotic than Exotic Locales, and settings stranger than even the Dreaming.

A fresh twist on the modern setting is offered by the "what if…?" parallel universe that is loved by speculative fiction authors. Take a standard precept of **Changeling** or a key event in its history, and ask yourself, "What if that didn't happen?" Imagine a game set in a world where the Shattering never happened. The sidhe would've never departed, the Concord wouldn't have been reached, oathcircles and motleys in the modern sense would've never existed. Or would they? Was the collapse of the nobility inevitable? Without their forced departure, would a far bloodier and devastating civil war have resulted? What would be humanity's place in a world where the fae retain the greater portion of their power? Would the world have moved on from the Middle Ages, or would they've continued indefinitely in the darkness of superstition? What would've happened if the Resurgence had never taken place? Or if the trolls had never lost their position of supremacy to the sidhe? So many questions, and so many stories in which to find the answers.

Alternatively, inspiration can be drawn from portions of animated movies, and chronicles can be set undersea in kingdoms populated by chimerical singing crustaceans and dancing piscine. Many websites offer suggestions for new water-dwelling kith based on popular folklore that can be adapted and fitted into the game (pooka *fish?*). Chronicles might explore fantastical worlds of seaweed forests and conniving sharks, or opt for a more realistic tone and examine the impact of pollution on the underwater environment and its inhabitants.

Although **Changeling** is a game of fantasy, mixing in some science-fictional elements can result in a unique story or chronicle. Remember, the Resurgence was a result of man walking on the moon; think of all the Glamour that could be gleaned from the legion followers of *Star Trek*, *Babylon 5*, and *Star Wars*! How long will it be before Jedi or Vorlon kith emerge from the Dreaming?

Consider how modern-day UFO lore parallels fairy tales: bobbing, flashing lights (in saucers rather than rings), and time distortion (people find that hours or days have passed in the world while they account for the passing of mere seconds). Even extra-terrestrials bear a strange resemblance to the "little people" of folklore, and much of their behavior is similar; they are eager to make those that they encounter eat their food or journey back with them to places unknown, leaving sketchy memories to surface in dreams. UFO investigators point to the illogical behavior of the ETs — their ridiculous questions, bizarre pseudo-science, the control rooms that seem less convincing than B-movie sets — and conclude that they are designed simply as mockeries. Are they? Are changelings behind the UFO phenomenon, or are they wild chimera? Either option has possibilities, whether players design characters to investigate, or to take part in some way.

Historical

Although you can use historical stories to trace the development of a group of characters over many times and many lives, it can be just as rewarding to set an entire chronicle in a

time other than our own. When doing so, however, remember that the **Changeling** rulebook describes the fae lives from a modern-day viewpoint and that a number of changes must be taken into account while you're designing stories. For instance, in pre-Shattering times, the Unseelie and Seelie Courts had not reached the Concord. Each court rules unchallenged at the appropriate time of year, and during their period of supremacy, changelings (and fae) are expected to fully indulge that Legacy without restraint. Players should be aware of this factor when designing their characters, and you must consider it when evaluating the character-group dynamic.

After the Shattering and before the Resurgence, the collapse of the conventional nobility, with the departure of the sidhe, obviously makes courtly life very different æ if possible at all. Remember that the courts are taken over by the most ambitious of the remaining commoners — either ushering in a new reign of their own or merely acting us regents until such time as the true kings and queens return. Stories involving these courts can be either grand and beautiful affairs that are full of the preserved beauty of a lost age, or creepy, claustrophobic slices of horror. Characters could encounter a court bound to the past, preserving and repeating dusty rituals that have been long since emptied of meaning. These "nouveau nobles" make memorable nasty villains. While sidhe may be terrible and cruel simply because it's their nature, commoners can be terrible and cruel because that is how they choose to be. And their cruelties can be oh-so-horribly inventive.

Naturally, they don't have to be villainous; they might be munificent bestowers of goodness who are far more tolerant and comprehensible than the sidhe could ever be. But, the best place is probably somewhere in-between.

The Mythic Age (Pre-Sundering)

The time of dreams! The glorious Golden Age of legend! The shining era when the realm of Arcadia and the mundane world were as one! There were no barriers between the realms of fae and humanity, and mankind yearned for the flame of madness and inspiration at the core of faerie, not turning away from that light to find truths in the dark. The long-vanished epoch that all changelings yearn to return to...mortal and fae in perfect harmony. Was it? The mystic energies of the Dreaming permeated the world, letting creatures fantastical and bizarre spring forth. Anything that could be dreamed existed, or would exist.

This time is when the realms were one, before history and before humankind turned away from the subtle truth and paradox of the Dreaming — before technology, before man first forged cold iron and in so doing, reforged his spirit. This time is one of terror, magic, superstition, of a fear of the dark. Equally, it is a time of possibility, of newness, of when the world was fresh and full of wonder as the first day of summer.

This is a time where there were dragons in the darkness, outside the fire's glow.

This world is one without Banality, where the rigor of scientific thought does not have the luxury of existence. People don't look to understand, but only to explain. And the mechanisms of explanation are stories, legends, and myths inspired by the dreams the fae taught them. When the Mythic human witnesses the fury of a thunderstorm raging over the mountain peaks, he doesn't think sage thoughts of the ionization of air and water particles — he runs to the wise woman who explains that the terrifying display of stabbing, blinding light and reverberating rumbling is caused by the clashing of the Mountain Giants as they battle with one another. The flashing lights, she says, are the sparks flying from their spears as they clash together; the great noise is the booming of their mighty voices as they roar in pain and triumph.

This age is one in which the fae are at the height of their power. They have nothing to fear from unbelief: Whatever they dream or find in dreams, they can make real. The fae's passions are the pulse of the dragon's blood deep in the earth, and their madness is the screaming of the demon wind in the darkest hours. While it might be fun to play beings of such elemental power, there are deeper and darker aspects of this age that deserve consideration in chronicles. Why did the fae teach humans to dream? Because they gloried in the delight of their own existence and desired to share it with their mortal cousins? Or, because they felt pity for them? But can this be true? Can it be that the fae were not so much interested in elevating humanity as in exploiting them? After all, whether through Reverie or Ravaging, mortals are the finest source of Glamour.

The behavior of the Mythic Ages' fae doesn't inspire belief in a benevolent motive. Cruel and capricious, whimsical and careless, fae used humanity as set-dressings in their own dramas and romances. Like children, amoral and selfish, they cared little if their toys broke, as long as their entertainment continued. Faced with the heedless arrogance of the Seelie and the wantonness of the Unseelie, it's no wonder that humanity turned its back on dreams to look for something constant and comprehensible. Perhaps the fae brought their doom on themselves. The abuse of their powers was the sin, the consequences of which will echo through the ages to come. The fae's penance — enclosure in Arcadia or banishment in a half-existence in a world chilled by the frost of Banality — must still be borne even in the present day. Exploring this idea of a fall from grace helps explore facets of our own humanity, and it adds impact to chronicles run in the present day (especially if the protagonists of this chronicle are reborn in the modern age).

Though changelings were so rare as to be virtually unknown by most of the fae, they existed in the Mythic Age — although the reasons for following the Changeling Way are obviously different. So the setup of your chronicle has to take these reasons into account. Some fae became changelings because they wanted to understand humans and to experience the novelty of mortality. Others did so from a dim feeling that their Kin were wrong to treat humanity as

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they did, and that they were too fickle and callous in their actions. As they gain understanding and compassion for their plight, they may find themselves working against their own kind (if you take up this option, remember that the Mists do not yet exist and, hence, characters have full access to their memories of Arcadia). Perhaps characters were forced to undergo the Changeling Way as punishment, and they now seek revenge on their former kinfolk, helping humanity exploit fae weaknesses.

Alternatively, you might cast the characters as fully fledged fae, working to undermine humanity, to keep them ignorant and innocent. Once things are tied down to mundanity by understanding, the potential for dreams is greatly diminished, making it harder for the fae to survive. This difficulty is symbolized in the act of tool-making; as man builds implements and rises through the metal ages of copper, bronze and iron, Banality increases until it is strong enough to raise a curtain between the two realms and remove Arcadia from the circles of the world. Once more, chronicles based around this premise offer new insights into the plight of the fae in modern times, for they are acting from selfish motives. Yet characters justify their actions as necessary for survival and as beneficial to humankind (with the Art of Soothsay, the fae may glimpse what humanity is capable of with the blight of technology). The future they bring on themselves may be their "just desserts."

The Ancient World

This is the time of the first civilizations. Humanity is no longer at the mercy of dreams, but it has sought a different way of perceiving the universe. Man seeks to understand, and through understanding, finds mastery. From the ancient Sumerian to the Greco-Roman, these societies are the first to deserve that name. The first gleams of the diamond of science are reflected in the changes in humanity's dreams. Almost all of the ancient civilizations entertained a belief in wonders and powers that are scoffed at in modern times, but the nature of that belief altered. Gods and myths still played a vital role, and likewise, that role had changed. The fundamental aspect of the change is that myths and legends were considered to be myth and legend rather than unquestioned truths. These stories had meaning and significance on a plane other than the literal one: They were symbols of something deeper.

In some societies, only the educated few made this realization, and jealously was wielded as a weapon of control (in the priesthood of Ancient Egypt, for example). Other civilizations were not satisfied with mythic explanations and sought out the truth hidden by old tales, teaching them that their gods were either the personification of natural phenomena or the distorted stories of leaders of an earlier age.

Art took on new qualities, as societal aesthetics were permeated with the growing sense that the world could be

understood. Foremost of these qualities were a sense of conscious restraint in the execution of them, a rational order and proportion of form. Artists strove to accurately reflect the world and to show their belief in an ordered, comprehensible universe.

And so, as the dreams that sustained them changed, so did the fae themselves. Although they remained beings of great power, theirs was a power diminished by the barriers between imagination and mundane reality. No longer incarnations of elemental force, fae became more human, or like distant reflections of humanity, conforming to the stories of gods, dragons, satyrs and trolls all mixed in the Dreaming.

Civilization's realization of the symbolic function of legend began to circumscribe the fae nature — locking their power and selves into orderly, distinct areas. For the first time, Banality was a serious force, clustering in thick drifts around the cities and groping blindly across the land. Though Banality is barely a hindrance, even in the dark corners of the country where monsters lurk in shadow, it was omnipresent.

The gods and mythical creatures — and so, by extension, the fae and changelings — are much more human than humans are. They love, they lust, they quarrel and they sulk and scheme. Their passions, though, are larger and more genuine than our own, and they give themselves to these passions wholly and without reserve. Stories involving these creatures are full of trickery, shapechanging, blessings, curses, and — just for the tragically hip **Vampire** refugees — bondage.

The fae, as always, are still capricious; if they give with one hand, they take away with the other, and vengeance is the most terrible (and most common) of all their passions.

Their fascinated infatuation with humanity remains also. Consider the limitless wealth of stories where all-too-human heroes have gods as patrons and guardians (but also think about the way in which these patrons seem to be more concerned with using their human wards to score points against their divine rivals. Altruism isn't quite the motivation it first appears to be). Not surprisingly, since the Middle Ages have yet to happen, fae society is not based on the feudal model, and this fact helps set the tone of a game. Study the religion of the local culture, note their organizations, pantheons, and the way gods interact with each other and with mortals. It becomes a blueprint for how the fae operate — tweaked as you desire.

Changelings are still uncommon, but the legends of the Ancient World tell us that they existed. From the Celtic tales of Cu Chulainn to the Greco-Roman Heracles/Hercules by way of Achilles, the sardine tin of myth is crammed with heroes who are the offspring of gods and humans, or nymphs and humans, or peculiar, gene-twisted combinations. Using these legends provides you with a springboard for adventures in the Ancient World. A hero slowly discovers her true heritage usually via visions, visitations, or street-corner muggings by monstrous enemies. Before she is allowed into the domain of the gods (Olympus, Tir-na-Nog, whatever

name legend attaches to it) to meet her divine parents, she must knowingly or unknowingly undergo tests that involve long quests, scaly monsters, a quick war, or a jaunt into the Underworld. The hero's journey in its most visceral form, and the story of changelings questing for a way to return to Arcadia — what more could you want in a chronicle? Answers on a postcard to….

The beauty of the Ancient World is that you needn't make your chronicle a worthy series of history lectures feebly disguised as a roleplaying game. Greek and Roman myths are pretty rambunctious as they are, and if you are inclined, it doesn't take much work to play them for laughs (the Monty Python group demonstrated this successfully in *Life of Brian*, and Frankie Howard with the *Up Pompeii* series. Titter ye not!). Toward the end of the period, history seems to join in the game and provide another seam — was Caligula's horse consul really a pooka up to no good? What nocker dreamed up the Wooden Horse of Troy? Did a sympathetic eshu take pity on Scheherazade?

The questing motif is significant, as it is repeated throughout cultures, and has a greater importance to changelings. Quests are a way of discovering the world, the self, and a way for changelings to be accepted back into their lost home. The Greco-Roman tales balance and contrast their comic elements with lavish helpings of tragedy — sometimes in the same story. Focusing on one or the other propels the game toward either pathos or boredom. Strive to incorporate many elements to round out the experience for players. It needn't be an exact, mathematical process; you don't need to have one funny scene for every heavy-duty angst showcase. One tone should dominate, with variations to keep players awake and interest high (keeping players enthused is one of those hoary old traditions from the dawn of roleplaying that the author firmly believes is a Very Good Idea, along with bribing the Storyteller and free pizza).

A legend that combines quest, comic and tragedy is Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus'/Ulysses' 10-year wanderings might be a quest undertaken in the Dreaming itself, with powerful magicians and witches, gods, and monsters (and the length of time over which the story takes place). And the TV shows *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess* convey the ideals of an Ancient World **Changeling** game. Both stress color and excitement over nit-picky historical accuracy, and both are humorous while bringing dark adversaries and bone-crunching action.

Chinese mythology and civilization offer a change from Western sources. Although just as full of violence and human foibles, there is a certain delicacy to many Chinese tales. Make your stories more obviously parables or allegories than normal to reflect this attribute. Further, a sense of artistry and spirituality permeates the Chinese culture, even in those areas where Banality might be expected to be high. The civil service (bureaucracy was an ancient Chinese innovation) was inextricably bound with the teachings of Confucius, and even mathematics and astronomy were regarded as arts rather than sciences.

Perhaps the most important feature of Chinese legend is the fascination with dragons — the Au. Unlike Western dragons, the Au are considered to be benevolent and extraordinarily powerful. One sage comments: "None of the animals is so wise as the dragon. His blessing power is not a false one. He can be smaller than small, bigger than big, higher than high, and lower than low." Dragons often ruled their own kingdoms and were symbols of China's mundane emperors; the face of an emperor was referred to as "the dragon face," his throne as "the dragon seat," and his garment as "the dragon robe." Rather than introducing dragons as a complex type of chimera, it's interesting to implement them as a kith — or indeed as all kiths. Historical sources document various types of dragons, each with its own area of influence or power (some examples are celestial dragons, earth dragons, and dragons of hidden treasure), which might easily be adapted into playable sub-kiths. Combining this fact with the emperor-court structure of the Chinese pantheon and mundane government can result in some very interesting tales.

The Middle Ages

The world had never seen an empire like Rome. And as always, its uniqueness drove those who could not aspire to the glory of greatness to seek solace in the green folds of jealously and hate. Its bright order was snuffed out by the decadence within and the marauding barbarian invaders from without, and the face of Europe was changed forever. Only wisps of memory remained as a darkness fell on the world. As Vikings came sweeping down from the North, and as the Magyars stormed across the steppes of Asia, waves of violence and destruction crashed down. Arable land was left untended. Trade routes withered. Regular commerce vanished almost entirely. Peasants became bound to the land by chains of toil and need, depending on the whim of their aristocratic landlords for protection and rudimentary "justice." And once again, monasteries became isolated outposts dedicated to the preservation and continuance of knowledge of the past. Only now, in the High Middle Ages, is the world beginning to emerge from the shadows and to step into a new dawn — a dawn that will be the Renaissance.

The feudal system is now firmly in place, creating a world of kings and their attendant nobles — barons, dukes, knights and squires, who all strive to better themselves by increasing their land and power. A remarkably large-scale system of regular commerce and trade is revived. The first universities are established in Italy, offering degrees in medicine, law and theology. The subjects are organized, studied and discussed as never before. Writings thought lost in the dismal horror of the Low Middle Ages are triumphantly recovered from monasteries or distant lands in which they had been safeguarded.

This world is lit by the flames of candlelight and faith. Old gods are gone forever. Though isolated pockets of resistance appear and fade as does snow, Rome turns to the Cross before her Fall, and the rest of the world turns, too. The papacy is everywhere; the Church is eponymous, powerful and worldly. It is the most sophisticated governing machine on the planet,

either exercising control by taking the reigns of local government directly, or by wielding the subtle knives of diplomacy in the courts of kings and law. The Church is no longer a gentle lamb waiting to be gathered up into its lost Heaven, rather it is a crusading lion determined to achieve that Heaven on Earth by devouring its enemies. It promises the reward most common folk believe in — a place of eternal rest after the weary toil of earthly existence — and the Church promises the only defense against demons and monsters that the Devil sends to plague and tempt humanity. Demons are everywhere, steering man's plans awry or securing the damnation of his eternal soul. They'll either trick you into burning in hellfire for all eternity, or they'll hunt you down and gnaw at the flesh from the bones of your still-living body.

Demons make life difficult for changelings and the fae since their behavior (as well as their essential nature) places them firmly in the "demonic emissaries of Satan" category. Maybe you happen to be Seelie and have nothing to do with the ghastly Wild Hunt that those Unseelie insist on staging, or maybe you're Kenny Clyff, the wolf pooka, and know that your trick with the woodcutter's daughter, her grandmother and that red cape was just a harmless joke. But the average peasant doesn't have the imagination or the time to make such fine distinctions. Oh no. Faeries? Everyone knows they're in league with the forces of darkness. Changelings? A replacement for a stolen human babe to pay the faerie's yearly tithe to Hell. There's no fooling the God-fearing. You're a *demon*. And demons are bad. Torchlit-procession-with-pitchforks bad. Thrown-on-a-flaming-pyre-and-roasted bad. Tied-to-a-boulder-and-left-in-the-lake bad. *Bad*.

Like changelings, the Middle Ages aren't the carbuncle of darkness festering between the idyll of the Ancient World and the humanistic triumphs of the Renaissance; nor are they ages of chivalrous courtly romance and bold, questing knights dazzled by the gleam of their own armor. They're a little of both without being wholly either. Terry Gilliam's *Jabberwocky* is a fine source for coming to grips with the ambiance of the ages; they marvelously evoke the right kind of tactility. Cities are dark and gloomy, and this is only the architecture. As Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* reveals, the people of the Middle Ages had a healthy sense of humor. The absurd nature of the prevailing superstitions can be used to bolster any comic touches you want to use, but remember, they are comic when seen only with modern eyes. For those who must contend with witches and warlocks, demons and devils, such superstitions are in all too deadly earnest. After all, these are the ages that spawn the Inquisition.

With its feudal courts, its knights, kings, dragons, princesses, devout monks and corrupt clerics, its wisdom and the shadow of its superstition, this era of history is the defining point of most works of modern fantasy. It is also the main source from which **Changeling** draws inspiration. If you and players yearn for slices of fantasy — high and low — this is a good period on which to focus. Noble trolls embark on glorious and dangerous quests, boggans work to safeguard peasants from the excesses of their nobles, sidhe knights vie

for honor and glory — and in the wild places, the moors and dark, dark forests far from the light of cities, lurk the beasts of legend who wait to begin their transition into memory. The scope for traditional fantasy is wide and obvious...but this is **Changeling** and it is more than that.

Why should the "beasts of legend" be relegated to the role of slavering, roaring cannon fodder for heroes who want exercise for over-greased swordarms? They're worthy of a personality at least, and it needn't be the hoary old stereotype that totter toothlessly on well-past-retirement age. Let characters try to explain the cowardly dragon who just wants to be friends with people ("Eat a helpless young maiden? But I faint at the very smell of blood! Oh, I've gone all dizzy... you heartless monsters! Oh, my poor heart!"), to a horde of peasants determined to have its head. Or the unicorn who prefers *male* virgins. Or a scholarly griffon with a penchant for writing long, and very bad, poetry who just happened to fall in love with the abbot's daughter. Or....

After all, they and the fae are both fading, and changelings may share more in common with these so-called "monsters" than they do with any mortal folk. Use this aspect to create a lurking atmosphere of prospective tragedy, of things coming to an end, of being lost without mourning — an ominous foreshadowing of coming disasters. Many in the Middle Ages believed they were living in the Biblical end-times and that Armageddon was just a few years in the future. This belief

has an insidious significance for the fae; after all, at the end of the Middle Ages, they undergo a sort of Armageddon as the Shattering overtakes them all.

The Renaissance

It was…a new age.
— Londo Mollari, *Babylon 5*

For the fae, the Renaissance is the beginning of the end because the Shattering fell like a thunderbolt. For humanity, it is a rebirth, though one that has its gestation in the Middle Ages.

Human scholars moved away from under the auspices of the Church, as they were no longer content with the Christian model of history. This model began with the Creation, then reached a zenith with the earthly incarnation of Christ, and ended in the all-consuming fire of Armageddon. Historians developed a view that valued the literature and achievements of past civilizations on their merits rather than as embellishments or cautionary warnings for the Judeo-Christian tradition. No longer were the ancients derided as barbarous savages; they were esteemed as the prosperous people of a vanished Golden Age, those to be held up as examples in the new age of enlightenment that they believed themselves to be ushering in. Perfection and training of the body was encouraged in a system of "humanistic" education that was designed to produce thinking, questioning, rounded beings,

rather than subservient monks or dutiful clergy. As an institution, the Church was becoming increasingly concerned with secular issues and being spiritually irrelevant at the same time. Learned and worthy men debated regarding the possibility of God being able to transform Himself into a sponge. Vain Popes commissioned statues of themselves at hideous expenses, for they were determined to secure a more earthly immortality. Corruption was accepted as the *de facto* standard.

In art and science, politics and warfare, all pulsates with change. Donatello and da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo created works of enduring beauty. Copernicus and Kepler, amongst others, made leaps in astronomy and mathematics that electrified humanity's conception of the universe — leaps that were joined by Galileo with the beginnings of modern physics. The invention of the printing press brought learning to the masses and allowed mass production of texts. For the first time, scholars had identical copies of texts from which to work, debate, argue and collaborate, allowing knowledge to be codified and correlated as never before. Machiavelli published his labyrinthine theories of rulership and politics; inter-state intrigue took shape as states established embassies in foreign lands, which spread throughout Europe to England. Rural society lessened in importance as the urban lifestyle flourished. Merchants and traders assumed great importance. In the wars of territorial expansion that could now be financed, the army of bowman-supported cavalry was replaced by hordes of footsoldiers carrying pikes and portable firearms. They were adequately supported by heavy artillery for dealing with fortifications and enemy troops.

Interesting times, indeed. The Shattering has driven sidhe nobility and true fae from the circles of the world. For those who chose to stay behind, and for those trapped as the gates to Arcadia closed shut, the Changeling Way was the only way to survive. It was a compromise with Banality. They were barely able to recall their homeland and their true selves, and they were bereft of their society and the ruling class that sustained it — those stragglers and exiles struggled to adapt to a newer, braver, colder world that no longer seemed to have a place for them.

This scramble to survive — a defense against the surge of Banality and a structure on which to hang their lives — is the most obvious premise for a chronicle during the Renaissance and Reformation. During the times before and after the departure of the sidhe, the day-to-day battle for continued existence (and the vanishing of nobility) makes courtly games difficult. Instead, consider what the new situation means for changelings; does a character view the new world as the catastrophic end of his ancient society, or as a glorious breath of freedom and a chance to establish something fairer and better? Or just more to his liking? Intrigue of a different kind can occur as the commoners band together in the first motleys for protection and company. How much can they trust each other? The motley setting up nearby? The ragged stranger who wanders into their lands? Themselves? If you set your game toward the end of the period, or in a commoner court that emulates the ways of the sidhe, the inchoate intrigues of the city-states can offer a new twist — Renaissance James Bond, anyone?

Securing Glamour in the enchantment-impoverished world might be an interesting starting point for a chronicle, too. After all, some of the greatest artists and inventors flourished during this era. And don't be nervous about letting characters meet and interact with them, and even to inspire them. A rare and unearthly beauty permeates Renaissance artwork that could have come only from those who had touched the heart of the Dreaming. The profusion of mechanical devices, their refinement and sophistication — their *craftsmanship* — is a delight and a reassurance to nockers (where else could that rarefied perfectionism have come from?). Their application in the field of battle is something to which trolls must learn to adjust. Unfortunately for pooka, humor took a sophisticated turn as wit was sharpened to an art form. There is still Glamour in the world for the Ravaging or the Rapturing; but its nature is different now, and changelings must in turn become different.

It was the Renaissance that furthered the belief that humankind rules over nature. The Renaissance banished magic and led to modern science and technology, and it bequeathed the most wondrous artworks that the world will ever know. These works of art truly convey what humanity could aspire to and achieve, with the inspiration of the Dreaming to show what lies beyond the confines of mundanity. A Renaissance chronicle can likewise inspire players and offer hope that a torch of Glamour will always burn, no matter how brightly.

The Caribbean

Aahr, me hearties! Shiver me timbers, Jim lad! Fifteen men on the dead man's eye (yo ho ho, and a stale pork pie)! Buried treasure! Wooden legs! Hooks and cutlasses! Parrots and crocodiles! Rum, sodomy, and the lash! The mocking death's head grin of Jolly Roger bidding a fond farewell as you take the last step off the plank!

An extract from Grungington-On-Sea's Xmas panto? Well, almost. In a word?

Pirates.

There have been pirates all through history, wherever there's been a sea and a couple of planks to nail together. In the Ancient World, pirates seemed to go hand-in-hand with trade (the Greeks and the Romans were by no means averse to a quick spot of piracy in between putting squares on the hypotenuses of triangles or staging violin concertos in burning cities). In the Middle Ages, the world was a veritable pirate sandwich as the Moors came from the South and the Vikings ravaged down from the North. The Golden Age of Piracy, however, is the time that furnishes material for exciting chronicles. But perhaps we're getting ahead of ourselves. You might think that pirates are much the same — simple, bloodthirsty folk with a penchant for buried treasure and avoiding ticking crocodiles — but they are more diverse than that, and if you run a game without players sneering at your feeble research, you should know about them.
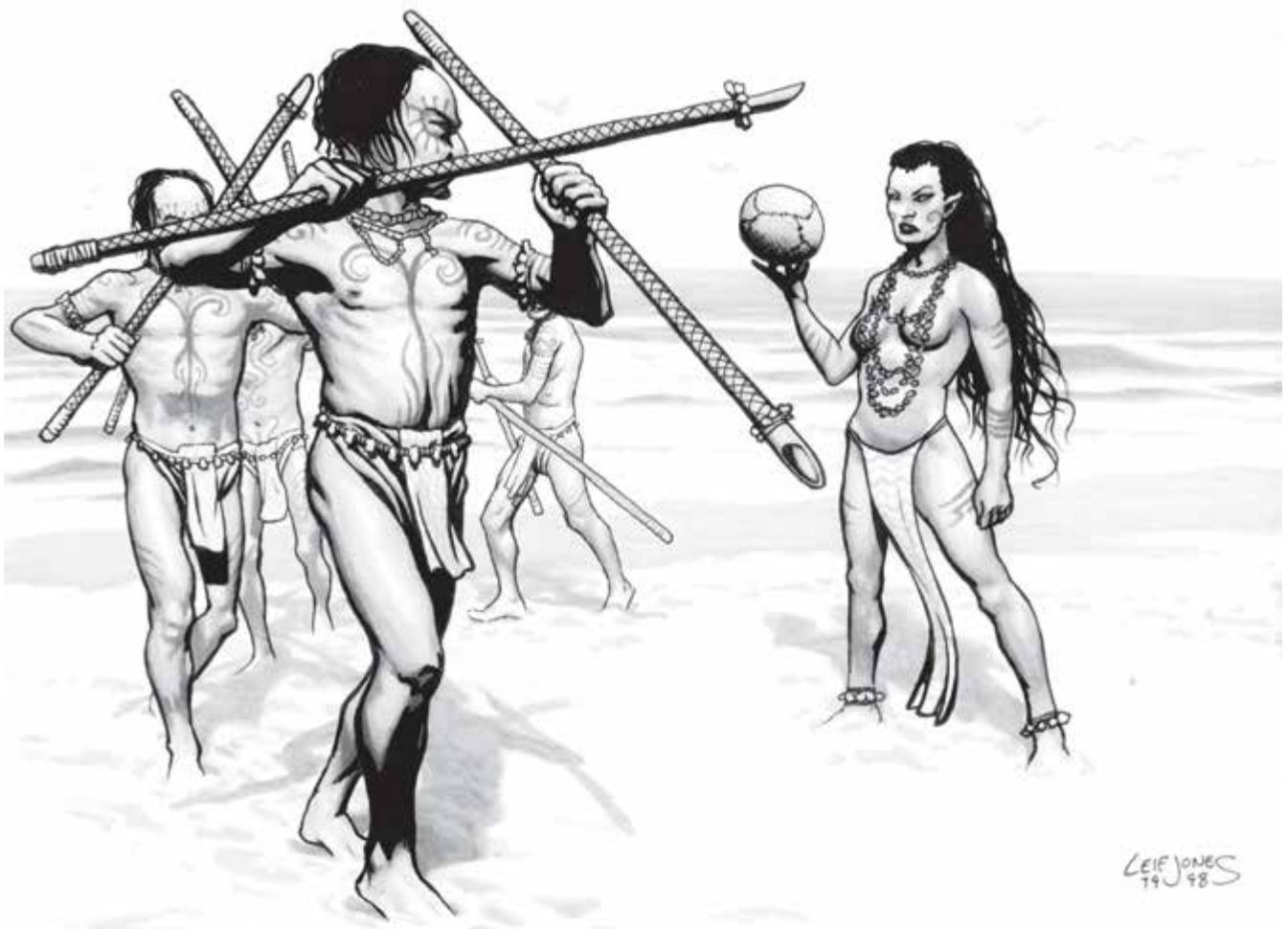
LEIF JONES
'94 '98

Piracy itself is defined by Groutfizzle's *Big Book of Naughty Things To Do* as "any robbery or other violent action for personal gain or ends and without sanction by a public or governing body, committed on the seas or in the air outwith the conventional jurisdiction of a state." The upshot of this excerpt is that genuine piracy is a selfish affair ("...for personal gain..."), so mutiny, revolution and other political matters have nothing to do with the average pirate. The typical one is far too sensible to get involved in that kind of thing. Governments, while traditionally not bodies keen to cultivate this kind of free-thinking enterprise among citizens, discourage the practice by interpreting the definition of piracy to mean that a pirate is "outwith" the legal system of any individual country — and that any country can, therefore, arrest the offending ship, try the crew, and do whatever the country does to people it doesn't like very much.

So much for the crime. What about the criminals, the privateers, the bold buccaneers, the proverbial pirates? Each of those terms accurately describes the motivations and circumstances of an individual's involvement with the realm. "Pirate" was a catch-all term that took in all those who sailed under Captain Death, the Jolly Roger, and as far as many governments were concerned, there was no difference between pirates, buccaneers or privateers. Many pirates were actually the disbanded crew members of the naval vessels from the wars that pockmarked the closing years of the Renaissance. Unwilling to tolerate the cruelty for which formal navies were notorious, they bought (or stole) ships and set out to make their way in the world.

Privateers were pirates with a license. Not quite *real* pirates, privateers often went from pirate to privateer, and vice versa, as it struck their fancy (or saved their skins). Governments and large private organizations hired the crew to perform a particular duty, such as obtaining slaves or some rare exotic commodity. Privateers were sometimes commissioned during wartime to be virtual mercenaries, enjoying the protection of the state in exchange for looting its enemies — and a share of the booty. The privateers' instructions were issued in the form of a Letter of Marque and were left vague enough so that the crew could not resolutely interpret them. Therefore, the privateers could acquire items that might have only a loose connection to the commission's instructions. In many cases, the privateers ignored the Marque and did whatever they pleased, or they came up with inventive interpretations that consisted of hacking anyone to bits who looked just at the ship the wrong way. Of course, this vagueness and looseness of connection were in the best interests of all concerned, since the organization responsible for issuing the Marque could

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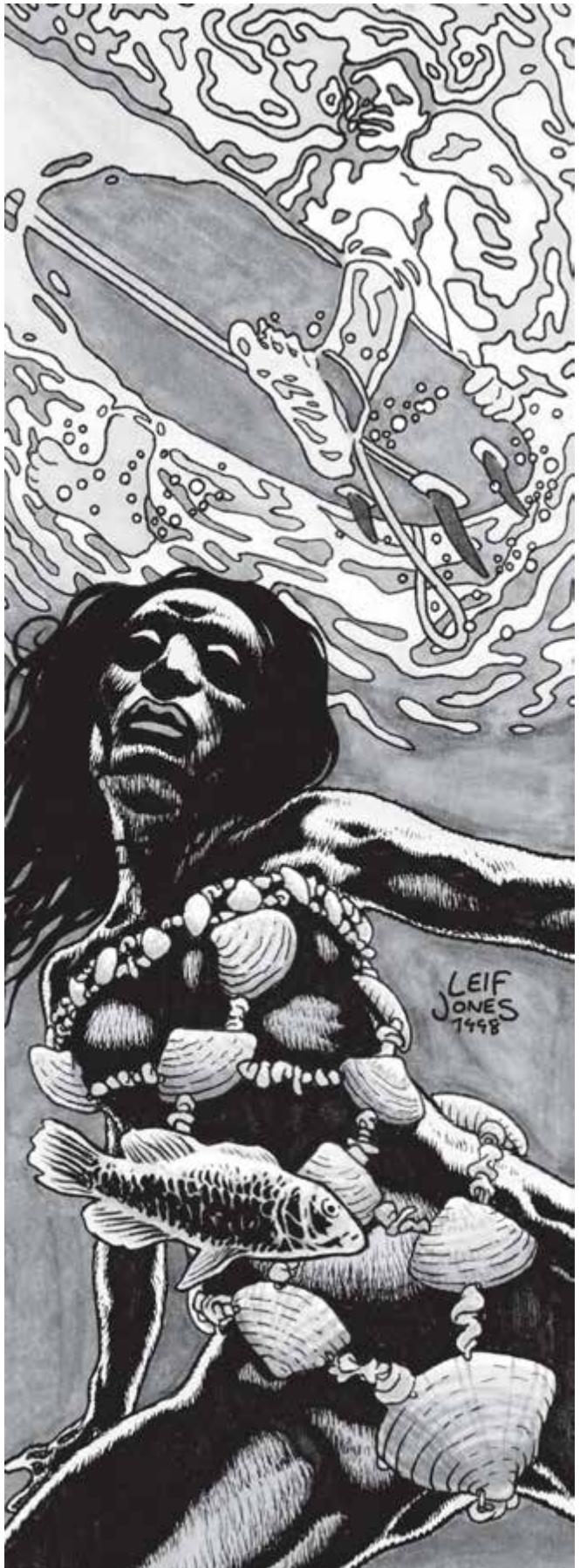
deny any ties to whatever the privateers are responsible for. (Rather like governments of today.) In another eerie parallel with modern political practice, privateers were arrested and executed if it was politically expedient for the country to deal with such a minor betrayal.

This freedom of allegiance can be exploited in chronicles that center around a ship's voyages and her crew of privateers. The characters may switch loyalties as they work for one court and then another, or support this baron and then that one. The political situation can be brushed aside as characters concentrate on becoming rich and having a good time while they're getting there — until they are no longer useful and must be dealt with for the greater good. These situations stand up well as tongue-in-cheek allegories of the modern democratic process. These chronicles can be simple, rollicking swashbucklers to complex layers of alliance and counter-alliance based on interpretations of the Marque.

Back to our examination of pirate varieties. Buccaneer is a corruption of a French word meaning "those who hunt wild pork." It wasn't a colorful insult for the pirates' victims, but a reference to their origins as settlers in the Caribbean who hunted, traded, and now and then ate wild boar. They were the adventurous ones who became fed up with the predictability of their diet (there are only so many ways to disguise the fact that you're eating pig for the 863rd time) and turned from hunting boar to hunting Spanish ships and — more rewardingly — Spanish gold. So "buccaneer" is more geographically precise than the other expressions.

There's often an overlap of privateers and buccaneers — buccaneers might become privateers for a time, according to whim and circumstance, and switch back again. And in any case, if you happen to get caught, arguing semantics isn't going to stop a magistrate from removing your noggin from your neck.

In the late 17th century, Spain and England spent their time waging messy war. England was particularly known for employing privateers to sail "on account" against enemies. Most buccaneers had no fondness for the Spanish, and thus didn't mind signing up with King Charles — after all, it placed a thin veneer of legitimacy on the villainous deeds they performed. And if everything turned too nasty, they could get some protection (or refuge, at least) from the English. It was possible to make a more than comfortable living this way. The center of operations was Port Royal, Jamaica; it was a town on good enough terms with destiny to be allowed to be in the right place at the right time. Jamaica was a lone bastion of English colonization amid a hostile host of Spanish territories. Port Royal was a good, safe harbor in the middle of trade routes between Spain and Panama, making it a natural launching point for pirate raiding parties (and plenty of wilder and alcohol-sodden parties).

Port Royal soon attracted more than just buccaneers and would-be privateers. It wasn't long before enterprising souls moved in, providing a range of "services" that helped a newly rich pirate become poor again. A pirate likes to spend his money. There's rum to be drunk, lads! Grog to be swilled, bets to be placed, and feasting and whores a-plenty!

And when a buccaneer finds all the gold gone and rum still to be drunk...he joins the crew of another privateer and sets out to raid the Spanish Main.

Port Royal is a fantastic backdrop for chronicles. It offers a gallery of (nearly) historically accurate rogues to banter with the player characters between raids. There is a certain vibrancy, color and freedom found here. After Captain Morgan swung from Gallow's Point and the profiteering "gentry" of plantation owners changed the town to one that suited their imagined status of refined and civilized people, Port Royal could hit its peak. There was a tavern serving grog and vittles for every 10 souls throughout the day and night. Ladies of the night provided the solace and safety for lonely souls, and the Church declined to involve itself in anything. Setting up or joining a landlubber's motley was not a problem, and neither was politics — though given the bucanneerish temperament, politics likely consisted of rivalries, bragging, drinking (or raiding), competitions, wagers, and primitive skullduggery more than carefully plotted Machiavellian intrigues. There was little of the conservative sexism that was found elsewhere; women were not treated as commodities or objects because many buccaneers were women (though some chose to dress as men, or adopt male disguises). They were women often noted for being bloodthirstier than their male counterparts. Pirate captains even enforced rules relating to their good treatment: "If at any time you meet with a prudent Woman, that Man that offers to meddle with her, without her Consent, shall suffer Death."

Pirate folklore is a blend of maritime superstition and classic ghost stories infused with the voudooistic practices of the native populace. Shiver players' timbers with ghost pirates, Voodoo Queens and crews of undead Spaniards that don't have the decency to stay in Davy Jones' locker. Although there is no historical evidence that pirates were engaged in the practice of voodoo, they had a healthy respect for native superstition, even if they weren't eager to admit it. It doesn't take a stretch of the imagination to create voodoo-practicing pirates that history does not record. This adaptation of native culture freshens run-of-the-mill villainy, and it is an interesting commentary on the changeling nature.

A pirate vessel is home, refuge, and tool (and for some, a kind of spouse; it's lonely on the high seas). To keep everything fresh and lively, try basing games around the peregrinations of the crew; perhaps they return every so often to a land-based court such as Port Royal for supplies, carousing, or a reward or two. Maybe the ship has a Balefire and becomes a floating motley. Contrary to what *Treasure Island* and its ilk say on the matter, pirate ships were run in a manner like a modern oathcircle: There's a series of protocols, the Articles of Piracy, by which every crew member from captain to cabin-boy abides. The Articles aren't commandments set in stone, but they are drawn up and signed by a ship's crew like a contract. The Articles are concerned with the issues that concern pirates — division of booty, crew responsibilities and punishments for infractions of the Articles.

A ship has positions of responsibility, though they aren't automatically positions of power. Pirates are not known for their enthusiasm for authority — the cruel regime onboard official naval vessels was known to drive honest men to piracy — and thus power was split between several individuals to ensure fair treatment and to minimize corruption. If you want to include some pseudo-politics or power-playing without getting too involved in the court system or wrapped in intrigue, put these areas of authority to use. The two chief positions of responsibility on a ship, captain and quartermaster, were typically elected by the crew based on its assessment of how well the candidate would perform in the role. The captain was tactician and battle commander, and to keep the position, he had to be consistently skillful, brave, and talented at bagging booty. The captain was the absolute, unquestioned authority during battle only; day-to-day decisions involved with running a ship were either the responsibility of others (the quartermaster or boatswain) or put to a vote. Navigation, timing and location of raids were thus a joint decision of all crew, but it was expected that the captain propose the majority of raids and detail their planning and execution. If raids went consistently bad, the captain was voted out and thrown off the ship or reduced in status to an ordinary crew member.

The quartermaster's principal concerns were supply and distribution. He supplied rations, shot, and powder; he distributed booty and punishment when required. The quartermaster led boarding parties and decided what was worth taking from looted vessels, and he was responsible — under supervision of the crew — for the storage of booty and the parceling out of shares (according to the terms laid down in the Articles). Interestingly, the quartermaster was the only crew member allowed to administer punishment. The captain could *order* a punishment to be meted out (an order that could be put to a vote), but if the quartermaster vetoed the order, there was nothing to be done. Punishments were thus required to be endorsed by at least two crew persons — a far cry from the arbitrary whim of captains in the formal navies of the time.

Punishments commonly inflicted on errant crew included marooning, which is somewhat removed from the visions conjured up by literature; pirates were not left on large islands with plenty of provisions but taken to tiny strips of land. They were left with a canteen of water and a gun and shot — should they wish to end their torment quickly. Moses' Law (forty lashes), keelhauling, and death were other brutal punishments that were preserves of the navy.

Minor, though notable, positions were the master carpenter, who was responsible for the ship's structural integrity; the gunner, who maintained the cannons and weaponry; and the boatswain, whose duties were to maintain the lifeboats, supervise the sails and rig the flags.

Ultimate resources for games taking place in this period are *Peter Pan*, naturally, and the *Monkey Island* series of computer

games, which are intelligent, beautifully atmospheric, and uproariously funny. Anything that encompasses these qualities is immediately worthy of attention.

Victorian

A funny thing about the world just after the invention of photography: It was remade, in black and white, to live forever. Not in a moral or ethical chiaroscuro, but a chromatic one, and the colors shine through all the brighter because of it. Blacks are blacker, whites are whiter. After Queen Victoria's royal endorsement of the new technology, photography swiftly became fashionable, and a panoply of images survive to depict her world and empire. The Victorian era is a magical one. We see it, its people, its follies and triumphs preserved in monochrome memory. It is the first fragment of history familiar to us, yet it is also strange, as it is made distant by the gulf of years.

A chronicle set in this age can exploit this wealth of imagery and of documented history (not to mention of the novels of the time). It allows players to find something familiar to give them a route into their characters and the game, while the distance of time gives it an electric edge of mystery and romance. Like the hand-tinting of a monochrome photograph, changelings bring color to the gray that suffuses our modern age.

The popular conception of Victorian times is one of civilization, of morés and manners, of restraint and refinement. Yet, this interpretation is only one facet of a far more complicated and unpleasant time. Modern politicians often speak of a return to "Victorian values" as if they were some magical talisman of civilized safety and morality. But scratch away the civilized veneer and a nastiness appears. Under the surface, prostitution and pornography proliferated. Child prostitutes were commonplace, and they were regularly solicited by the same men who condemned them in public. Murder and crime rates were high, and police sometimes chose not to inquire in the poor, low-class areas unless, like the Whitechapel murders (the infamous Ripper case), they were "exposed" in the popular press. Outward devoutness concealed a Church becoming concerned once again with secular affairs, while the pseudo-religious practice of Spiritualism flourished, convincing many (including several famous individuals) that the dead were in contact with the living.

Amid this social hypocrisy, the distinctions between the rich and the poor became more clearly defined. The barriers between the two grew higher as well. As industrialization grew, conditions for workers deteriorated badly. Disease and death reigned, to the supreme indifference of the ruling and political classes; workers were a resource to be exploited like any other (some held the opinion that the low class weren't even human at all). Where then is the place for changelings?

There were those who dreamed that things could be better. Edwin Chadwick and John Fielden, factory owners and industrialists, sought to improve conditions for their workers. What inspired them? What made them pay attention to the plight of their employees? Perhaps your chronicle can answer these questions, as characters awaken to their nature amid the drudgery of working life and downtrodden souls (and their hope and aspirations) around them. Chronicles can explore the class barriers and the society that gave rise to them. They can look for common ground and ways to reach it, letting characters escape their initial surroundings to find those who inspire them to begin the process of improvement.

New steam-press technology helped pulp fiction and cheap newspapers achieve widespread consumption, and reporters and novelists used their audience to force recognition to the underclass' plight, or to expose the scandalous behavior of the uppercrust. Popular writers, such as Dickens, toured to read from their novels to packed audiences.

A related possibility, but lighter in tone, is to cast characters as traveling music-hall acts. Music halls were a popular feature of 19th-century life and a necessary escape, though at first they were considered beneath the attention of "serious" society, and moral reformers commented on the halls' excessive and immoral "promotion of drunkenness, obscenity, and sensuality." This "commentary" did nothing to diminish attendance; it probably accomplished quite the opposite.

Commercial forces eventually brought the artistes from the free-and-easies to the suburbs and the halls became grander in the process. Acts ranged from musicians, magicians, singers and comedians (the variety circuit was the origination of stand-up comedy) to acrobats, mediums, and mock fights. Players can have oathcircles or traveling motleys make up their entourage; politics can arise from the intrigues between the "highbrow" and "populist" acts, as well as between the performers and the backstage crew. Working out the details of the act(s) is definitely a requirement for the game — nothing else like it builds and encourages pre-game characterization, enthusiasm and research. And how does the press and audience react to performances that are literally magical? Do the changelings leave a legacy of hope behind, or do they cruelly taunt the downtrodden with a glimpse of something wonderful that they'll never see again?

Chronicles set in places other than Europe (and particularly Britain) can highlight these nations' ingrained arrogance. Some firmly believed in White Man's Burden — that they had a God-given charge to seek out new countries and cultures, impose their civilizing influence, and somehow save them from themselves.

In Africa and the New World, it was not so much culture clash as culture annihilation. A chronicle might look at the destruction of indigenous tradition from the perspective of the native changelings (examining the reasons for the bitterness of the Nunnehi toward their Western cousins is the most obvious example). If you want to make your points in a more visceral way, characters might be agents of the "civilizing" governments, destroying in the earnest belief that they are doing good. This way makes players think about how and why Banality affects their characters.

Postcards and music halls, ice cream and serial killing, mineral water and manners, fish and chips and cholera, teacups and child prostitution, gas light and pornography — these are the ingredients of the Victorian age. What will *you* make of them?

The Resurgence

I recall the 70's chiefly for three things: lack of taste, lack of taste, and lack of taste.

— Tony Bennett

One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind — and a bloody great avalanche for the fae. A wave of Glamour washes across the world unlike anything before or since, and the walls of Arcadia come tumbling down. And with them, come the sidhe. The nobility, back again, are ready to reclaim their old titles and power. It doesn't matter that most of them are dishonored exiles, it doesn't matter that they've been away for centuries, it doesn't matter that the world has moved on — does it? They are the essence of rulership, the personification of kings and empresses. They were made from our dreams to rule over us. Who wouldn't be eager to resume their rightful place on bended knee, back beneath their tender yoke?

Players can answer these questions in a Resurgence chronicle. Despite the fondness for flares and sideburns, it's a terrifying and exciting time from whatever perspective you choose to assume. Initially, decide which part of the Resurgence you want to focus on (unless your ambition far exceeds your common sense and you aim to tackle *all* of it). Are you interested in a return of the sidhe? The aftermath of the Night of Iron Knives? The characters must decide what should be done in the light of such catastrophic betrayal. The war and its many battles? Perhaps characters are leaders of a city's defenses and making tactical decisions that affect the course of the entire war. Or they're just footsoldiers — common changelings caught up in the warring ideologies that disrupt their lives. The betrayals and negotiations of victory and surrender? The terms of an armistice shape the years that follow, determining the success or failure of the peace it sets out to achieve; wisdom and understanding, and even compassion for the enemy, are needed. The discovery of High King David, or of his fosterage and refuge? If characters are among his guardians, they must display cunning and courage to ensure that he survives to fulfill his destiny. They must prevent his discovery. The instability that followed his coronation? Each of these topics requires a different approach (the aftermath of war is clearly different and distinct from the prologue and duration). Yet, the common thread that binds them is the idea of the past forcing itself on the present; it denotes an unwillingness to let go and accept the inevitability of change.

Of the two clearest paths, one is playing commoners, or pseudo-nobility, reacting to restored Glamour and returning sidhe; the other is playing the exiled nobles themselves. As commoners, characters are adjusted to the demands of the modern age and are familiar with the world. The sidhe are the stuff of legend, even among changelings, and now they have returned and they confront the world. The sidhe demand it conform to their own archaic memories. Chronicles can explore the impacts on a society (how would the British government react if King Arthur came knocking on the doors of Parliament, waved Excalibur and demanded unopposed rulership?).

Allow players to test how much history and tradition mean to their characters. Are the sidhe harbingers of a faerie Renaissance, or saviors from Banality and the misjudged rule of the common people, or are they the oppressive remains of a system that died long ago? Whatever view characters adopt, they'll have to deal with its consequences — perhaps by acting as mediators between sidhe and modern Kithain, explaining the new age to the sidhe and highlighting differences in attitude, atmosphere, technology and terrain. At the same time, they can urge their peers to accept or revolt. The game will be a fraught balancing act of delicate negotiation and hard-fought compromise that is underscored by the tragic knowledge that it's all for nothing and the Night of the Iron Knives *is* going to happen.

The other side of the proverbial coin is looking at the situation from the perspective of the sidhe. For them the world is intolerably strange and cruel. The knowledge of their loss and exile is an ache that spurs them into acts of pride and desperation in an attempt to find or make something familiar to comfort them. Everything they do to regain their position is perfectly justifiable to them — it is, after all, an integral part of their essence.

Aside from the type of stories you might run, what mood and what feel might a Resurgence chronicle seek to evoke? The impossible has become spectacularly possible. A man has walked on the moon. The stars and the mysteries of space seem within humanity's grasp. People look forward to the future; they have hope for prosperity rather than a dystopia of bleakness. Though, by their human heritage, changelings can share in the eagerness and anticipation (and even exploit the surging Glamour it brings them), but they must also deal with an impossibility that has become real. Rather than one that brings the promise of renewal, they contend with something that seeks to lock them in the stasis of antiquity and reduce them to being less than they were. Again, the Kithain are trapped between two worlds, two possibilities, and unable to fully partake of either. Stories might then try to capture the feelings that this constraint produces — the middle ground between hope and frustration.

It is a struggle against beauty gone wrong and against a past that won't let itself transcend into memory. Perhaps the Resurgence and its consequences are a temporal nexus, laying the foundations of the Gothic-Punk milieu. After all, *something must go wrong between Then and Now. The dreams turn sour, the heart hardens. Is it the sidhe's fault? The commoners? Or changelings collectively, as they turn away from inspiration to wage war and let Banality tear humanity's dreams apart? The war can be exciting and full of glorious battles and raids. The aftermath can be intriguing and brimming with secret negotiation and ghastly betrayals. But no war has ever brought a perfect — or lasting — peace, and no war passes without leaving scars.*

And scars take a long time to fade.
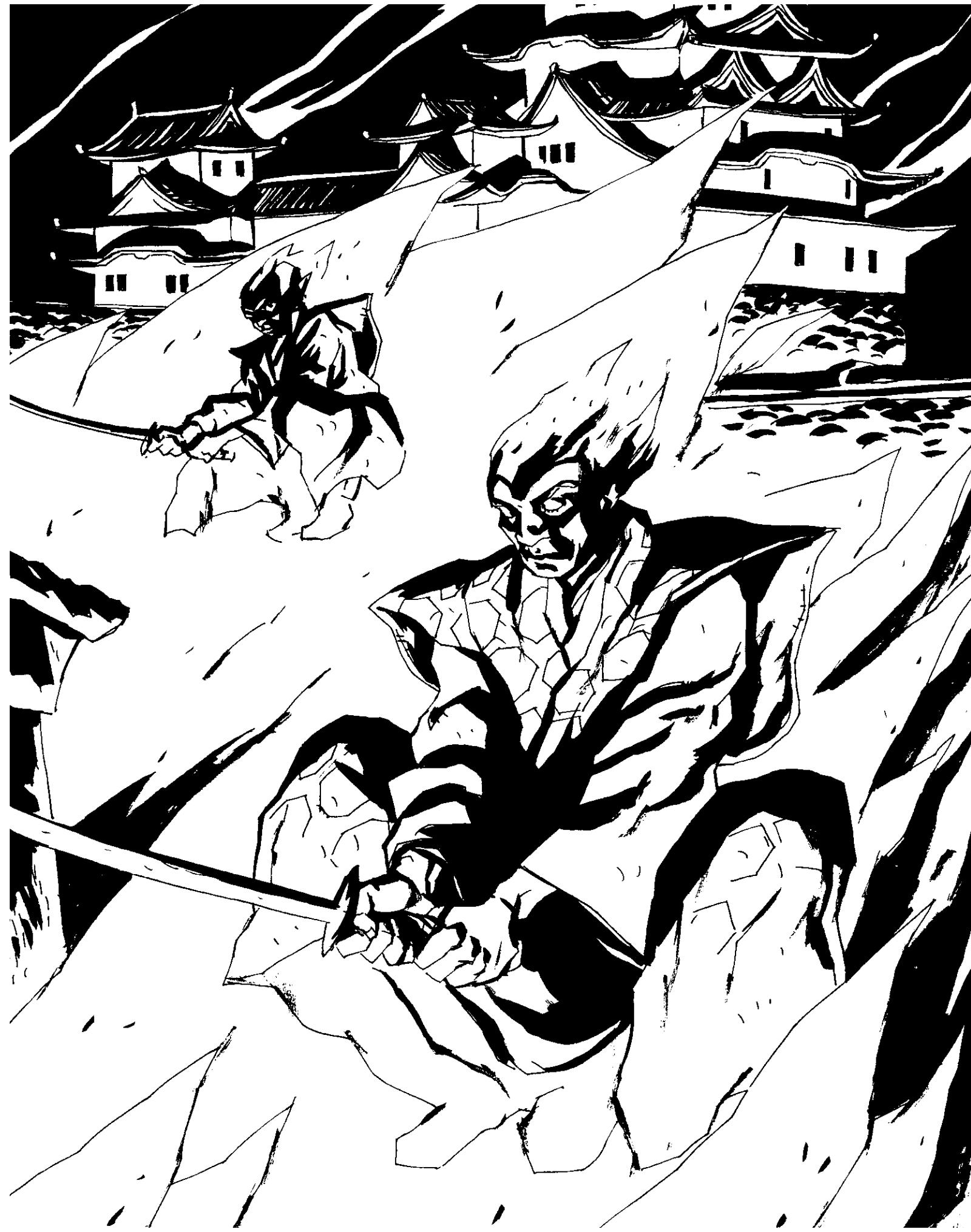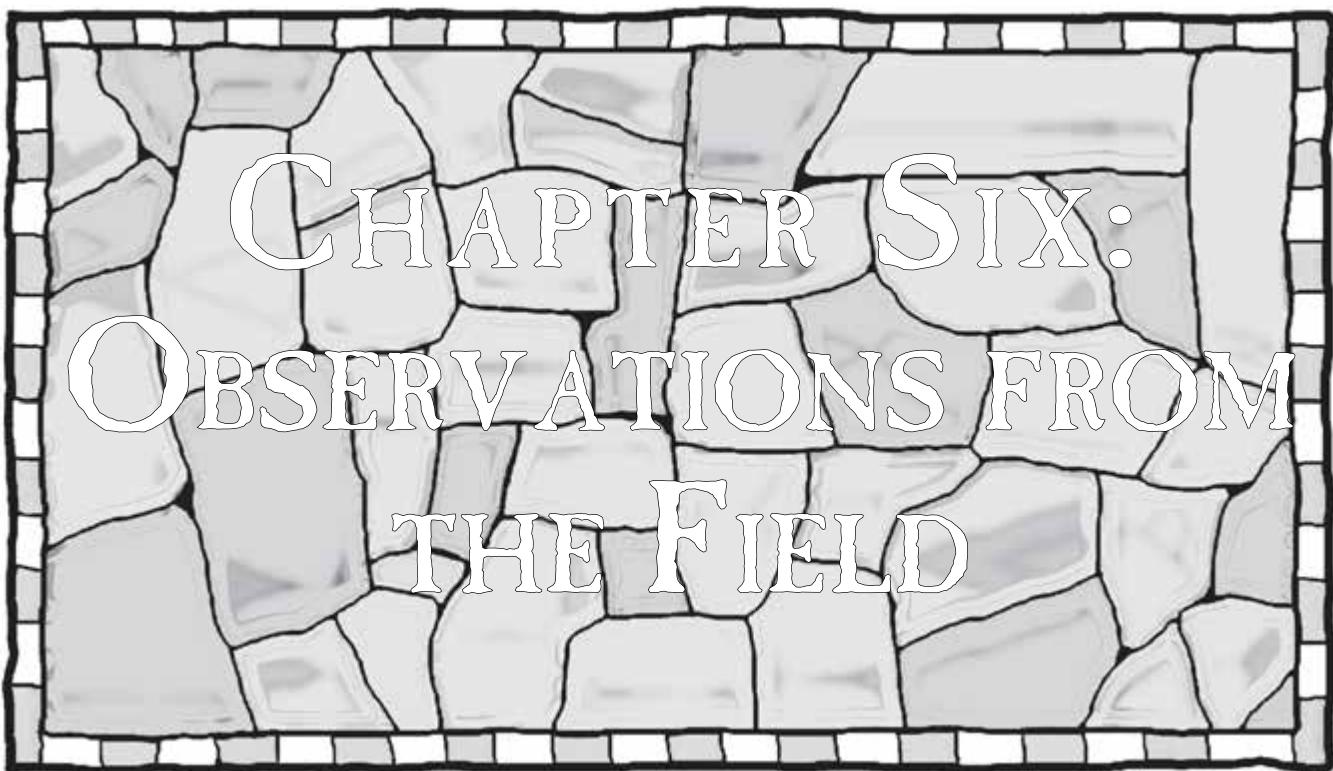
CHAPTER SIX: OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

Dance there upon the shore;
What need have you to care
For wind or water's roar?
And tumble out your hair
That the salt drops have wet;
Being young you have not known
The fool's triumph, nor yet
Love lost as soon as won,
Nor the labourer dead
And all the sheaves to bind.
What need have you to dread
The monstrous crying of wind?
— W.B. Yeats, "To a Child Dancing in the Wind"

When Storytellers Collide
by Nancy Schultz-Yetter

At long last, someone else is going to run a **Changeling** game! A chance to relax and play rather than have the headache of coming up with the plots, the Storyteller characters and dealing with all the player and character conflicts. It sounds like a nice vacation; so you create a character, invest some time in a background and turn it over to the Storyteller. The first few sessions go OK before a few minor problems crop up. Then the Storyteller does something that makes you shout, "No! This is all wrong!"

It's great to take a break from Storytelling. It can also play hell with the nerves when it's the first time you've played with the new Storyteller. Frequently, a new one does things that make you wince, groan or scream. Before you get all bent out

of shape, take a moment and ask yourself why you are having a problem. Does it originate with the Storyteller or is it with you? Is it simply a difference in style, or is there a *real* problem?

If it's just a matter of something you would have done differently, but it has no real effect on the story, then it's probably a matter of style. Some Storytellers run fast-paced chronicles, with almost no downtime between adventures. Others run slower ones with months of downtime, which also leaves plenty of time for blue-booking. Some Storytellers have a problem with inter-party fighting, while others see it as an enhancement of the game. It's all a matter of the Storyteller's style, and no one is "wrong." However, if this style is rubbing you the wrong way, there are ways to handle it.

First, determine the exact nature of your problem with the Storyteller's style. Sit down and observe the game. If you get your pride out of the way, you might even learn something from the different storytelling method.

It may simply be that your character does not suit the chronicle. In such a case, slight modifications solve the problem. This method is very easy if the only problems are in a character's personality, not in the statistics. If it is in the statistics, explain it to your Storyteller. Most are likely to allow you to make slight modifications to your character to let her fit in better, especially if it is early on in the chronicle.

If your problem is a personal issue, like the inter-party fighting, mention that to the Storyteller — particularly if you know that other players are having the same problem. Ask her to help tone down the fighting, or to at least stop encouraging it (if she is).

The problems, for the majority of the time, are going to be stylistic. You find that your Storyteller does something without blinking that you would never do. And it's not something that Storytellers shouldn't do; it's not a rules error, it's just a different way of handling things. In a situation like this one, the only option is to grin and bear it because each Storyteller has his own style, and it will inevitably conflict with yours somewhere. Even if he's your "apprentice," styles will lock horns. So, deal with it. Offer advice and suggestions on how you would have called that rule or played that character. Don't be bossy, or people will tell you to go back to running your game or shut up, and they'll have the right to.

But if there is a real problem, you're not the only one who's going to notice. Other players, especially those that are used to your style, will also take note and may complain before you do. But if other people notice and no one says anything, then the problem is just going to fester until it explodes.

So what to do? If this problem is a real one, then it needs to be addressed. It could be a mechanics issue, such as he is ignoring a certain rule, or he is employing one you ignore so much that you've forgotten it. Again, it comes back to a style issue, but this matter has larger consequences. If everyone is used to your house rules, and this other Storyteller's house rules are making things rougher for everyone, then players are going to complain. As one who coddles players in a way they've become used to, you should step forward and set out to find a compromise.

If the rule is not being ignored, but the Storyteller doesn't know about it, point it out subtly. You're not the only Storyteller with pride. If it's not a mechanics or style
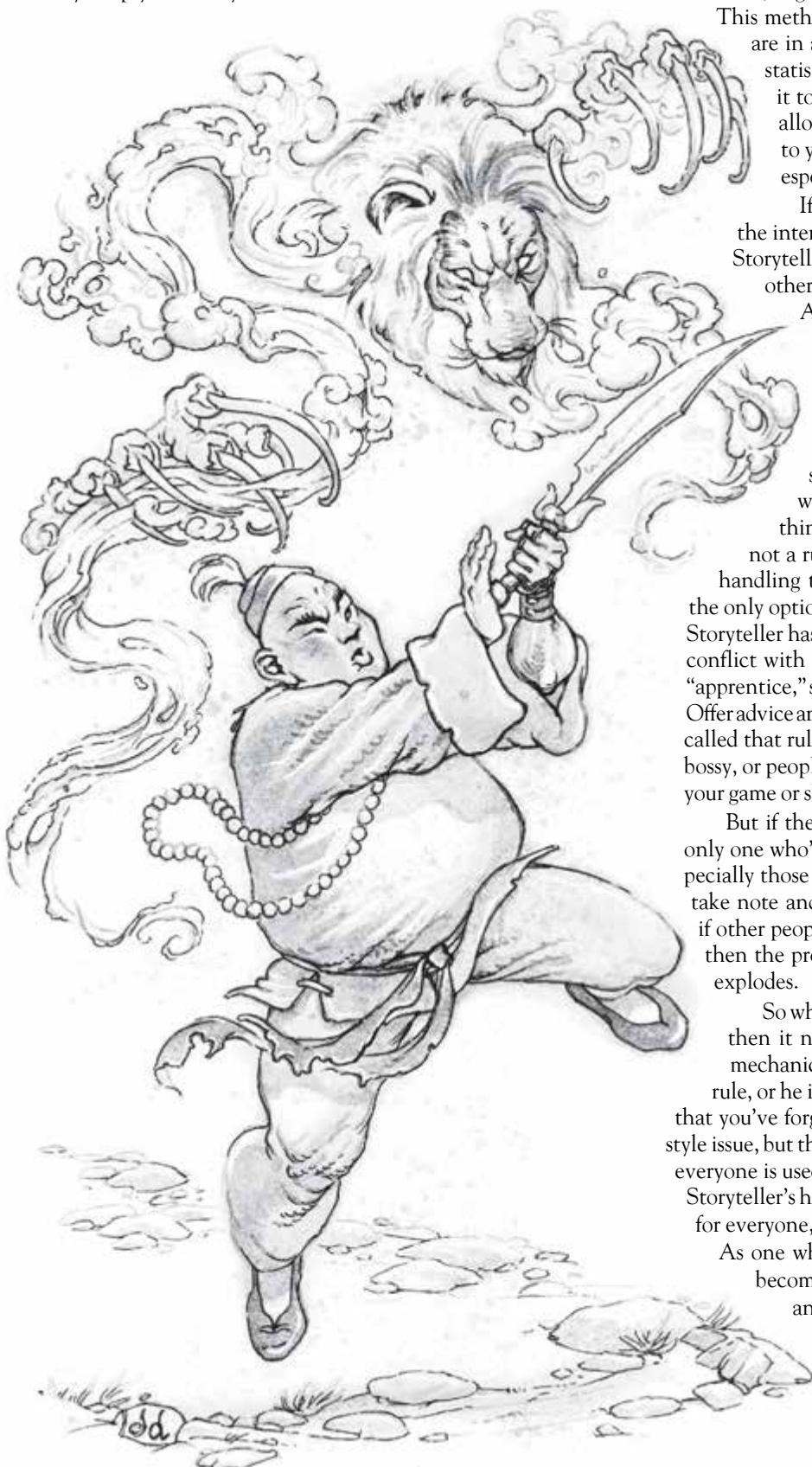
problem, then it's a *real* problem. There are some things that Storytellers should and should not do, and when the Storyteller breaks these rules, the game suffers. These unwritten, or written, rules aren't always broken with malice of forethought, or even with players' awareness of the rule being transgressed. Sometimes the story problems arise from style ones because the game that the Storyteller is attempting to run just doesn't suit the *Storyteller* at all.

A Storyteller may try a new type of chronicle and find that it isn't enjoyable for his players. In such cases, the Storyteller's pride may not let him admit there are problems, or that players are not enjoying it. This attribute is true of Storytellers who get kudos and praise for one of the Storyteller systems (such as **Vampire** or **Werewolf**) and then they try to run something else — or for Storytellers who run other systems well, but they can't adjust to the freeform of the Storyteller system.

When this situation happens, don't let it go, especially if other players notice the problem, too. Talk to the Storyteller about it: nicely, politely and with your temper in check. Make suggestions on how he could change the chronicle to something that he feels he can run, while perpetuating everyone having fun. Kindly point out where some of the mistakes were made, and suggest methods to fix them. Gamers typically have large, fragile egos, and Storyteller's have bigger egos than most, so you want to be cautious. Your Storyteller will hopefully respect your opinions, if you have been there yourself.

Sometimes, however, the story problem is a deeper one. It's a style problem, yes, but it's also a major error in running stories. There are two story errors that I have seen far too many times, and even the best Storytellers make them. The errors are sometimes made for plot expedience either because the Storyteller didn't think the story through, or things just happen and the Storyteller isn't sure how to change it at this late date. The two major problems are "Hero Complex" and "May the plot be with you."

Hero Complex

A Storyteller frequently chooses a Hero for the adventure aspect. Unless everyone is in on it at the beginning, this choice can be really frustrating for everyone else, especially if there ends up being a core group: the Hero, the faithful sidekick and best friend, and the Hero's love interest. Everyone else then fades into the woodwork. This disregard can cause a spill-over of bad feelings. Even the most mature gamer is frustrated at seeing his carefully crafted character flippantly passed over, except when he's the only one who can do something that the Hero needs done.

If everyone agreed that there is going to be the Hero and his companions from the start of the chronicle, then everyone *except* the Hero should expect to be supporting cast for most adventures. The supporting cast should get their chance to shine, and giving the Storyteller a plot hook or three is probably the best option.

If the Hero came into existence because he was needed for the plot, then the Storyteller should have talked it over with everyone at the inception. Storytellers sometimes don't think about the consequences of what their actions, and a dominant player becomes the Hero because he got the neat toy, or whatever. When a Hero emerges and the Storyteller can't write plots without him, the Storyteller should take a break and look at everyone else's character sheet, then talk to the other players and work out other stories and avenues for their characters, on which the Storyteller can then concentrate.

May the Plot Be with You

The forgivable error of Storytellers, "May the plot be with you" is not always a mistake. When the story calls for something to happen, then the Storyteller needs to make sure it happens. The error comes into existence when one is heavy-handed about it. I rarely tell my players that they can't do something; I'll start target numbers at 15 for instance and they have to bring it down from there. Or, I'll just let the player roll and tell her that there aren't enough successes there for whatever she wanted to do. The problem arises when it appears to players that the plot is more important than characters. Whether the Storyteller views it this way or not, if players see it, they'll start grumbling for sure.

The solution is simple: Don't hold so tightly to your plotline, or keep the idea, but let the exactness of the events change. Never have anything written in proverbial stone. Flexibility is the key to telling a good story, and a rigid plotline can break as players rebel against it. And some go out of their way to cause plot problems as a way of enacting their displeasure.

The other side of the mirror is when you, as Storyteller, have someone else who runs games and insists on telling you what you are doing wrong. It does happen, which is why you want to be careful about telling your Storyteller about problems that *you* have. If you criticize and complain too much, they'll take license to do the same.

But let's say you have been good, or you haven't play in one of their games, but now they're telling you how to run yours. What do you do then?

Listen.

Most of the complaints are going to be style- and mechanics-based. And then you are perfectly within your rights to take the "Because I'm the Storyteller, that's why" attitude. It is, after all, your game, your headache, and your creation. But they might suggest a better way to do something, and they often know the rules better than you do. You may want to use these "new" rules.

Backing out of a Hero situation is a problem. The best way to handle that is to give the Hero "time off" and concentrate on the other characters — possibly even lifting some to Hero status, at least for a time. Come back to the Hero later, but before she starts to feel neglected.

The "May the plot be with you" situation is easier to handle on an immediate scale. Write an adventure based on what they players want for their characters, and let them dictate the plots and subplots. Be subtle about forcing the issue when you need the plot to go a certain way. But watch yourself because when the plotline eclipses characters, it is difficult to control.

Whether as Storyteller or player, there will be conflicts with other Storytellers. Sit back and observe as much as you complain about it, and everyone can come away from it as a better Storyteller.

Transcending the Mundane on the Hero's Path
By Buck Marchinton

For many of us, gaming began as a pastime involving paper, dice and some friends. Our characters had little emotional investment; they were rolled up in a few minutes and ready for action when the game master said, "You're all in the tavern," or some similar stock line. I still hear players say with tongue planted firmly in cheek, "I'll sit down next to those obvious player character types."

A beer and pretzels game is fine now and then. But roleplaying can be so much more.

This game is one about Storytelling. So, think about your favorite stories, be they novels, movies or something you hear around the fire. The mundane world dissolves, and until you close the book or the credits roll, the story dictates reality. You become the characters in a sense; you feel fear, anger and joy at their overcome obstacles. Writers of those characters admit to the same feelings as their creations take on a life of their own; many authors say their books didn't turn out like they thought because their characters decided to do something different. Your challenge, as for Storyteller and players, lies in capturing that spirit of truly being your character and in taking your innate creativity a step beyond "let's pretend," to where a character gains a voice of his own. As one player put it, "When you open your mouth and Sir Richard's words come out, then we start transcending the mundane."

But how? What moves a game beyond paper and dice into the place where players shed tears of grief, feel genuine relief at averted disaster or let loose a howl of triumph? How do we reach that point where we put on the mask, breathe life into a collection of statistics and let the character take hold?

Paving the Path

Bringing a game to life is a shared responsibility. For the players' part, their characters have to be three-dimensional. Make characters real! Give them a history! Real people have lives outside the context we see them, and those experiences definitely impact their personalities and outlooks. Assume this matter is so with your troupe of changelings (and your Storyteller characters, for that matter). Ask players to answer the questions listed on page 122 of the main rulebook. Encourage them to write a short vignette that defines a point about their character. For instance, the Gwydion cavalier's player might write about how the noble prepares for a duel. Or a pooka's player may relate the trickster's latest descent into an Unseelie mind-set. By writing a short sketch or a journal entry, players attain a better understanding of what makes their characters tick.

As Storyteller, yours is the harder task; while players have to come up with a living, breathing character, you must give them a living, breathing world. If characters start the game as fae, they should be a little bit knowledgeable about the local changeling scene; they certainly are familiar with the mundane world. Remember, though, that a good setting isn't meant to overwhelm, but to give players
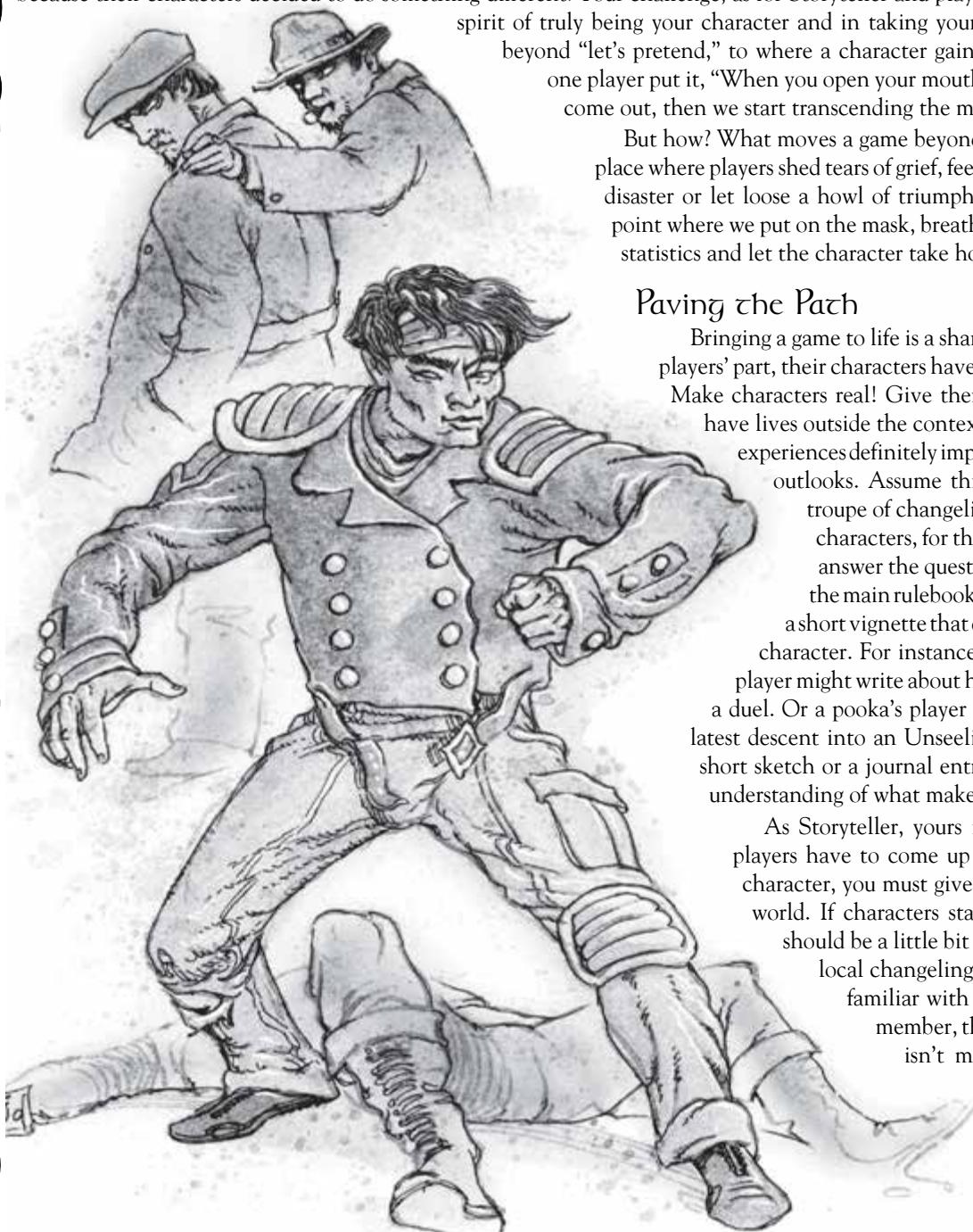
enough foundation on which to build. Yet, handing everyone a 50-page dossier to memorize before the prelude may be pushing it.

While some Storyteller characters will be straightforward and flat (like redcap guards attacking the escaping player characters), you owe it to players to flesh out key personalities. Give characters someone they can really interact with, and your troupe will be more engaged. Also, make some opponents adversaries rather than simple villains. What's the difference? Take the local baron, for example: He may be someone characters truly respect and yet still causes them loads of grief if they work at cross-purposes. Legends are full of duels between unwilling combatants. Finally, remember that Unseelie doesn't necessarily equate with irredeemable evil. The fae may have a darker philosophy, but striving to find common ground may result in understanding, if not friendship.

Give players a sense that what their characters do here and now may have unforeseen consequences. Maybe a respected artist and potential dreamer moves into the neighborhood as a result of the changelings' "taking a bite out of crime." But the vengeful noble of House Ailil will demand to know who made his best-laid plans go astray.

It's much easier to involve characters if plots capture players' interests. Find out what interests each player and give it to her. If you know that Rick loves political intrigue, Joan likes helping people and Jan really goes for heroic epics, you must make the world big enough so that all players have something to sink their teeth into. A good Storyteller can weave these disparate threads into a cohesive rope, which then bind characters and pulls them along the Hero's path. When a character follows a plot thread because a character would want to, not because the *player* sees it as progressing the game, that's a sign of true roleplaying.

Stepping onto the Path

You've probably heard it before, but it bears repeating: Atmosphere and mood are crucial elements. That's not to say they're above a good plot or memorable characters, but putting players in the proper environment with minimal mundane distractions makes it easier to suspend their disbelief. Appropriate music, muted lights, no TV or phone — these enhancements improve both players' mind-set and your own. Try to impinge this mood with whatever props best set the stage. Having Monty Python jokes flying more furiously than sword blows may be just what you want in a lighthearted chronicle, but if the game runs toward the "grim high destiny" style, out of character comic relief scuttles any attempt to get into character.

If, after all the preparation, the players don't find their characters meshing in the first session, don't worry. Many of the best TV series need a season to shake down before the synergy gels, so expect a game to run the same way. After things finally click, though, it's damn satisfying when a *character* gives a rousing soliloquy, and the amazed *player* asks, "Where did *that* come from?"

As Storyteller, remember that even if you run a game everyone enjoys, you can always find room to improve. Talk to players after each session. Ask what was good, what could be improved and what their characters are planning or think-

ing. Find out what they learned, and if it was less or more than expected, adjust accordingly for next time.

Keeping on the Path

So, the session went well. Regardless of the characters' plight when the curtain fell, players were happy and psyched to do more. Now you have another problem: keeping the momentum going. Gaming weekly may be possible for some, but mundane conflicts like work, school and distance separate more and more troupes (believe me, having players scattered over two states makes for limited gaming windows). Letting a game lie fallow for a month or four makes it hard to rev things up again. Unless players keep copious notes and reread them before each session, they're liable to forget crucial details and may find it hard to slip back into character.

One solution is blue-booking. The player, with the Storyteller as final arbiter, writes about things she wishes to do or people she wishes to meet. Maybe her Fiona singer wants to attach herself to a college band with dreamer potential, pursue a romance with that admirer at court or practice fencing so she'll be ready next time that House Gwydion fop gets uppity. The Storyteller writes the results of the player's actions. Blue-booking is great for handling situations other players aren't interested in or shouldn't know about; it's also ideal for offstage activities that slow down group play. When the troupe includes, ahem, aggressive personalities, blue-booking gives more timid players a chance to shine. By using this technique to build some history and experience, you can draw peripheral, semi-interested players into the thick of the plot. Best of all, you have a copy of the proceedings to remind you what happened. When available, e-mail is also hard to beat, although notebooks or legal pads work just dandy. Goblin paper is not recommended if you wish to keep permanent records.

Plan time before each session to review what happened during the previous adventure. Start the ball rolling with, "Tell me you did," and players compare their notes and recollections until a coherent view of the adventure emerges. Don't be afraid to remind players about important details; the crucial clue a troll noticed "yesterday" in game time could be forgotten by a player after a six-month hiatus in real time.

The Path's End

The most memorable and inspiring moments in gaming happen when a chronicle or major story arc comes to an end. More than any part of the tale, the end should be well-realized — for it's the punchline, the denouement, and the culmination of all that's gone before. After many adventures, characters have a stake in things, and now they have everything to gain or lose. Maybe their new freehold is about to fall to Banality, or the Storyteller character everybody has grown to love and trust betrays them. Perhaps an army stands between the party and their quest's end. All the threads come together; the consequences of all that players accomplished or failed make themselves plain now. Let the kiddies suffer if they snubbed Duke Firebrand, but give them the benefit of whatever allies they made, like the lo-

cal Fianna pack. Let the pace crescendo, and allow characters to doubt success. A well-done dramatic climax never fails to sweep up players. It's always better for them to say, "Whew! That was close!" than to murmur, "Hmm, that wasn't so bad; I expected worse." And as the curtain falls on a well-told tale, players may be breathless, joyous or emotionally strung-out — but they'll all be happy.

It's a long way from two-dimensional "roll playing," to a character so well-defined that he begins to live by his own logic instead of the player's. But having been there, as a player and a Storyteller, I wouldn't do it any other way. This is true roleplaying, the ultimate "let's pretend," where anything is possible, where dreams do come true. Isn't that what **Changeling** is all about?

Storyteller or Player: Who Sets the Pace?
by Neil Mick

OK, you've designed the chronicle and the Storyteller characters, written down a few story ideas and given thought into how you want the chronicle to end. You might have a few ideas of where and when you want the primary action to take place, and perhaps you have some notes on plots and motivations of the antagonist(s), as well as a few neutrals who might be part of the chronicle. What now?

Enter the characters. If the Storyteller's settings house the body of the roleplaying game, then the player characters are its lifeblood. A Storyteller can mold and sculpt a chronicle setting to extreme, realistic detail; however, characters' actions are what imbue life to its stories. Player characters also govern the overall pace and emotional tone throughout the course of the story. Sure, the Storyteller sets this tone at the beginning, but the success of the story hinges on whether or not the emotion level strikes a respondent chord in the player characters. Consider a primitive Storyteller chronicle punctuated by that weakest of plot devices: combat.

The Storyteller throws villains at characters in an attempt to raise the anxiety level of players. Now suppose players decide *not* to engage in combat. If the Storyteller tries to force combat down the throats of characters who aren't interested, the story (and chronicle) would probably last about two sessions. Characters must agree to the initial terms laid out by the Storyteller or the game's theme changes.

This change is not necessarily a bad thing. Far worse is the stubborn or inexperienced Storyteller who refuses to run a flexible game. An example is a player character who finds that his sidhe's use of Sovereign is totally ineffective against certain favored Storyteller characters, with no good reason other than that the character is one of the Storyteller's favorites.

A slight bending of the rules and favoring characters in plot twists is healthy for the long life of the chronicle. One of my personal standards for a good Storyteller is how willing she is to allow her favorite Storyteller characters to die, if that's what is called for in the story.

This concession doesn't mean that one should let characters walk all over your Storyteller characters (quite the opposite: If they get uppity to their lords, off with their heads!), but if characters wish to delve into unexpected themes and areas, let them. Inform them that you'll need time to reconsider the ramifications of this change in theme and to perhaps come up with new characters.

Case in point: When **Vampire** was first published, I ran a chronicle with several players who were new to roleplaying. One wanted to run a Toreador vampire-artist with a morbid compulsion to use corpses as sculpture. She was not interested in combat or intrigue, she wanted only to create art out of death. This character felt she was beyond such petty concerns as humanity.

Now, those of you who are familiar with **Vampire** are probably thinking: "So what? She was just playing a Sabbat!" But the Sabbat handbook hadn't even been written yet. She had invented the character-type on her own, as well as the concept of running a character "outside" normal Humanity rules.

At that time, I had less experience as a Storyteller, and I was not flexible enough to sufficiently adapt her character into the chronicle. If I had been, my story might have been much richer because of her input. Who knows? I might have taken the whole chronicle into an area unexplored by the rules. I could have eventually invented my own unique rules for the Sabbat.

You, as Storyteller, may not want to always have the player characters go "where no one has gone before," however. If not, this does not mean you are being inflexible; you are just setting limits. Chronicle limitations are important if the game is to develop complexity beyond the initial Storyteller notes. If players are always running off exploring areas of your setting that you haven't developed until that moment of exploration, you aren't going to get much of the initial setting to evolve.

A balance between the Storyteller-driven chronicle and one that is character-driven is vitally important. Player characters, though, usually do not begin their characters as ready to cut out on their own, and those that do so early on are grabbing for power. I had a player character in my game who wanted to rob a bank, and he used his cantrips to befuddle the guards and bank tellers (never mind how he was able to overcome their Banality; it's a long story). He died because he was alone and had not planned the robbery; if he had taken the time to plan the bank heist and organize a motley around the idea of robbing banks, the ending would certainly be different. I might have had several stories entitled, "Pooka Capone and the 10th St. Willies Hit 1st National." I would have designed antagonists uniquely suited to the story threads, such as troll cops or mortals who remember more of the changeling heists than they should (are they Autumn People?).

Player characters need encouragement (and a little instruction) before they seek their own roads. The natural response of any player introducing a new character is to be a little cautious and play her cards close to the vest. She will probably take her cues from Storyteller plot turns before she reacts, just as you are taking cues from her background and prelude to bring her fully into the story.

Once players feel comfortable with their characters (perhaps after two to three stories), encourage them to strike out on their own. Players whose characters amass a bit of power are more open to generating their own story than a player struggling to survive. Even so, a player character can explore new avenues under many different circumstances. A player-sluagh hiding from adversaries might ask the Storyteller if there is anything interesting in the closets. On a whim, you decide to let a character find an unusual statuette carelessly tossed into a shoe box, or a diary that has no special relationship to the sluagh's plight. After the excitement dies down, the sluagh might decide to explore his booty in more detail.

Because humans are territorial, players could also feel emboldened to set off on their own when they have a base of operations, such as a freehold or motley headquarters. Detailed notes, combined with loose threads, are really helpful for player encouragement here. Supposing the motley base is a run-down Holiday Inn: One of the maids is a pretty college student with untapped potential; yes, I know you're just dying to make her into some supernatural being with hidden powers, but try letting her background remain vague. Perhaps a player character develops romantic feelings for this mortal, who is distantly related to the Storyteller character's hidden "power" (if she has any). Let the player determine the setting, and step in only when players need a slight nudge. If the Storyteller character is consistently ignored, throw in another possible thread; perhaps the student is studying art....

Another way to encourage character-driven stories is to tell them what you want. Ask players to write detailed character notes to cover what happens during long periods of downtime. Be attentive to their suggestions: If a player mentions during character-generation that her boggan has a garden in which she occasionally harvests Glamour, ask what she is planning to do with the garden. Would she like to make a drawing of its layout? If she seems unmotivated, toss in the evil boggart who is tunneling under her garden and ruining it for a totally unrelated reason. The more unresolved threads you leave for a character to grasp and weave into her own story, the better.

Let's face it — the main reason we roleplay is for enjoyment. Whether we are storytelling or playing a character, we expect to have fun and more fun. In my experience, the most enjoyment of playing **Changeling** arises when players engage the roleplaying experience so fully that they completely forget that it is a game for awhile. This experience is real.
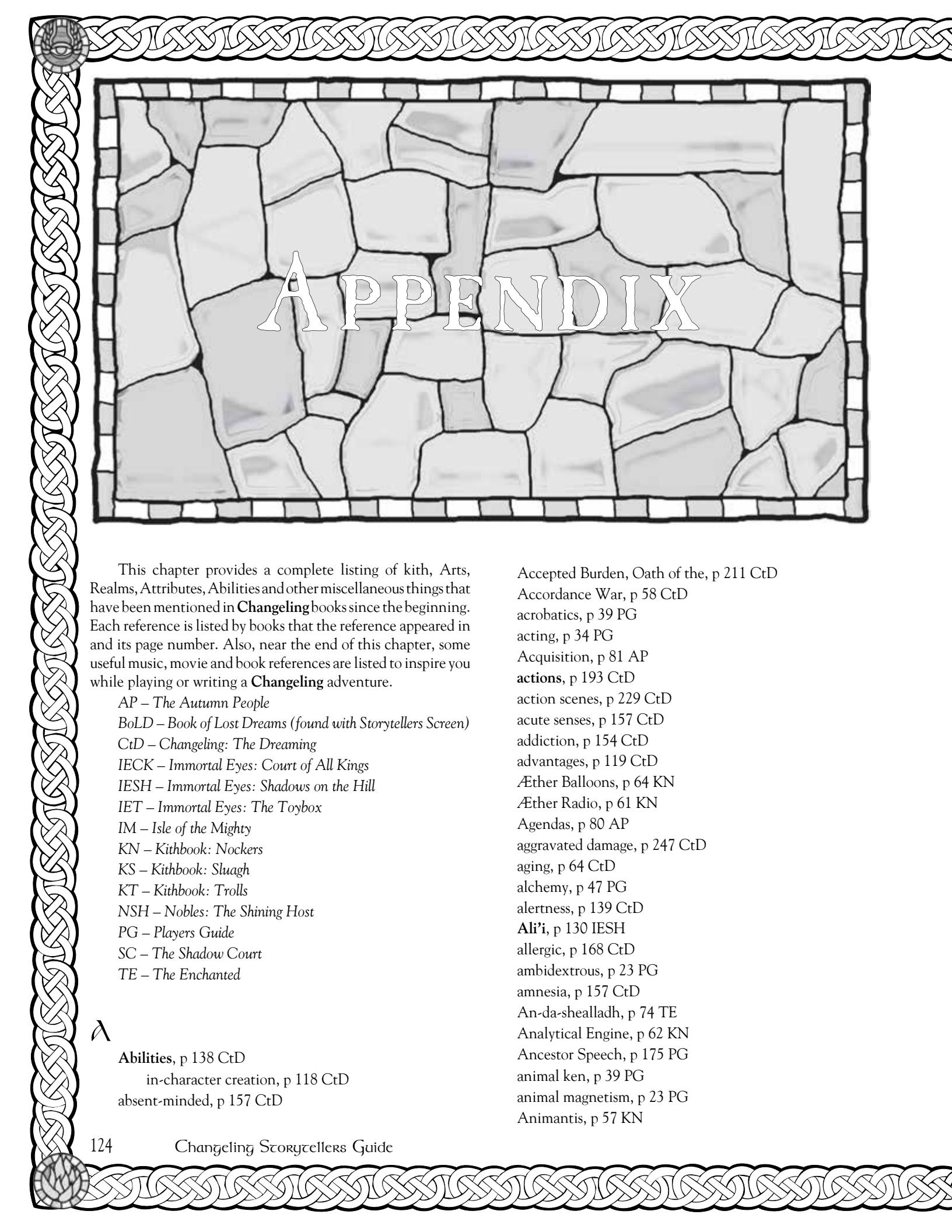
APPENDIX

This chapter provides a complete listing of kith, Arts, Realms, Attributes, Abilities and other miscellaneous things that have been mentioned in **Changeling** books since the beginning. Each reference is listed by books that the reference appeared in and its page number. Also, near the end of this chapter, some useful music, movie and book references are listed to inspire you while playing or writing a **Changeling** adventure.

AP – The Autumn People
BoLD – Book of Lost Dreams (found with Storytellers Screen)
CtD – Changeling: The Dreaming
IECK – Immortal Eyes: Court of All Kings
IESH – Immortal Eyes: Shadows on the Hill
IET – Immortal Eyes: The Toybox
IM – Isle of the Mighty
KN – Kithbook: Nockers
KS – Kithbook: Sluagh
KT – Kithbook: Trolls
NSH – Nobles: The Shining Host
PG – Players Guide
SC – The Shadow Court
TE – The Enchanted

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animal ken, p 39 PG
animal magnetism, p 23 PG
Animantis, p 57 KN

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Setting the Scene

While every chronicle has a different feel to it, the following recommendations are a few books and films that can be useful "homework" for any **Changeling** Storyteller.

Films

Labyrinth — A teenage girl must traverse the maze of the Goblin King to find her baby brother, who was stolen by this king (played by David Bowie). The classic elements of **Changeling** as beautifully envisioned by Brian Froud and the late Jim Henson.

The Never Ending Story — A young boy discovers a book describing the dying of a mystic world and the adventures of its young savior, which are unusually parallel to the boy's own life.

Willow — A classic quest-story of sorcery, warriors and Good vs. Evil in a Celtic myth-based world.

Hook — Not so much about fae as it is about growing up and childhood imagination. Captain Hook sails out of the past for revenge on a Banality-ridden Peter Pan, and grown-up Peter has to rediscover his imagination (and himself) to save his children.

The Dark Crystal — The first collaboration between Jim Henson and Brian Froud, resulting in magnificent visuals and an atmosphere completely alien to Earth's.

Legend — Tom Cruise's acting aside, this Ridley Scott film offers a world that might be our own, in which magic is vanishing through evil intent or human carelessness and the forces of good must rally to save it. And that is Tim Curry under the giant horns.

Secret of Roan Inish — An American film set in Ireland, aptly directed by John Sayles, based on people who still believe in the fae and the old ways of Ireland. Selkies, take note!

The Fisher King — A modern-day tale about the search for love, sanity, and the Holy Grail. IT is an excellent film that explores the darker possibilities for **Changeling**.

Novels and Comics

Bull, Emma — War for the Oaks. A mix of the gritty World-of-Darkness streets with fantasy elements that make for a marvelous read.

Carroll, Lewis — Alice in Wonderland and **Through the Looking Glass**. Classics. If you didn't read them during your childhood, it's never too late to do so.

Cooper, Susan — The Dark is Rising series. The classic Celtic myth-based series. It is another childhood favorite that deserves to be rediscovered.

Froud, Brian and Alan Lee — Faeries. A source of both faerie portraits and old folklore, drawn as a field guide. A must.

Gaiman, Neil — Sandman and **The Books of Magic.** Fantasy, both dark and light, at its best, interwoven into the mythos of the world. Several issues of both lines feature the world of the fae.

Lackey, Mercedes — Knights of Ghosts and Shadows and **Summoned to Tourney**. Two wild, fun tales of medieval recreation, pagan rock bands, and Bay-Area fae. Not classics, but still fun.

Lewis, C.S. — Narnia Chronicles. Read this stuff. If you have to ask why, you probably haven't.

de Lint, Charles — Jack the Giant-Killer. The Unseelie are rampaging in Canada, the power of the Seelie is waning, and a young woman named Jackie must step into the role of the foretold hero. A rollicking retelling of the old folk tale for the Adult Fairy Tale Series, edited by Terri Windling and Eileen Datlow.

de Lint, Charles — Greenmantle. A powerful tale of ancient mysteries in the modern Canadian woods.

Lovecraft, H.P. — The Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath. Lovecraft wasn't all doom and gloom. This series of stories takes you through realms literally created from the stuff of dreams, from the mystic cats of Ulthar to the strange night-creatures that haunt the chasms.

Music

Many of these albums can be found in any music store, although their unusual styles sometimes make them hard to classify. Some may be found in the Pop/Rock section, some under New Age.

• Loreena McKennitt — Celtic-Goth mixed with her sweet voice and beautiful harp. Her renditions of literary pieces like Yeats' "The Stolen Child" and Tennyson's "The Lady of Shallotte" have made her reputation.

• Enya — An obvious choice, with her lush vocals and a marvelous range of evocative music that has graced soundtracks and four of her own albums.

• Silly Wizard — A traditional Celtic folk band, best known for the song "Queen of Argyll."

• Boiled in Lead — A lunatic mainstay of the folk/rock movement with the music to back their reputation, including *The Gypsy* collaboration with fantasy author Steven Brust.

• Dead Can Dance — Their range spans traditional folk, ethnic, historic and everything in-between. A soundtrack for any World-of-Darkness story.

• Wolfstone — A good mix of traditional and hard rock.

• Oysterband — One of the leading bands in the English folk/punk movement with strong mystical underpinnings to their music. Not for the easily offended or politically conservative.

• Levellers — An energetic new band picking up where the classics left off, then going beyond. What Oysterband might sound like if they were sober.

• The Pogues — The quintessential Celtic-punk band. Hard on the ears, but lots of fun.

• Ceolbeg — More traditional rock stuff, comprised of some of the movers and shakers of the Celtic folk scene.

• October Project — Thoughtful lyrics, powerful vocals, and a wide range of style.

• Kate Bush — With dreamlike movements, ethereal vocals and surreal arrangements. *Never For Ever* is especially appropriate.

• Steeleye Span — With their emphasis on modern arrangements of traditional songs, this innovative band led the pack in the folk/rock movement.

• Fairport Convention — Like Steeleye Span, Fairport combined traditional songs, such as "Maddy Groves" and "Tam Lin," with imaginative, contemporary music. Sandy Denny's voice alone is worth the price of their classic *Liege and Leaf*.

• Tannahill Weavers — One of the longest running traditional Scottish folk bands. They also go through pipers like Spinal Tap went through drummers.

• Capercaille — They did the soundtrack to *Rob Roy*.

• Movie soundtracks are appropriate, even if they didn't come from a fantasy film. They're meant to create an atmosphere without being intrusive, and do it well. Go through your collection and listen, and you may come up with some surprising finds.

Changeling

STORYTELLERS GUIDE ™

A World of Dreams

Like its name, Changeling is an ever-changing world full of mystery and surprise. Unfortunately, this mystery sometimes spills over into the rules, as well as the setting. The Changeling Storytellers Guide clarifies many of the most commonly asked questions about playing Changeling, while offering an abundance of new information that is sure to invigorate any chronicle.

The Changeling Storytellers Guide features:

- New "diceless" rules for systems such as Reverie, combat and even cantrip casting
- Suggestions for alternate settings in which to set your Changeling chronicle
- Clarifications of already-existing rules, as well as guidelines for maximizing the use of chimera in your chronicle

CHANGELING
The Dreaming ™